the weekly
Standard

APRIL 8, 2002

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The U.N.'s Jewish Problem RUTH R. WISSE

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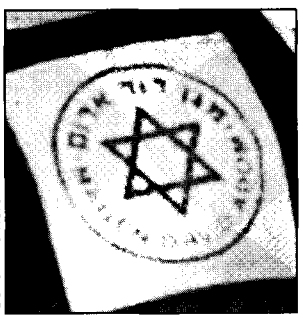

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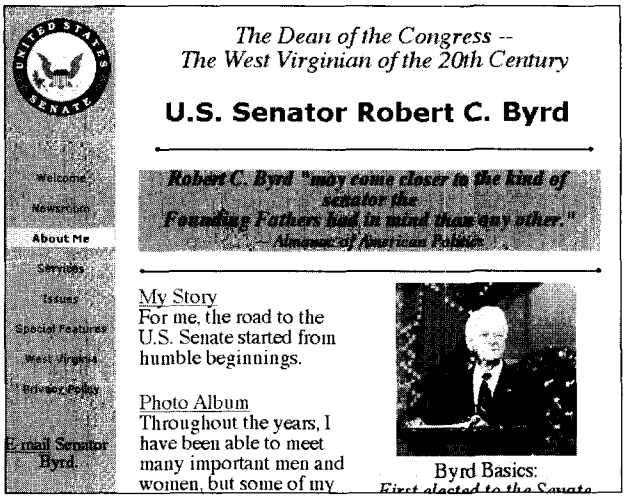
Byrd Droppings

Want a laugh? Hie on over to Sen. Robert C. Byrd's official Web page—*www.senate.gov/~byrd*—and click the appropriately labeled "About Me" option. Then follow the link for "My Story," where you'll find what has to be the greatest example of unchecked, unselfconscious egotism currently on display in Washington. Which is saying quite a lot.

Sen. Byrd's cringe-making first-person essay, entitled "From Humble Beginnings to West Virginian of the Century," begins with little Bobby "mastering life's early lessons" as a "virtual orphan" in the coalfields of West Virginia, and watches him in slackjawed admiration until it comes time, just after World War II, to develop a "new vision of what my home state and my country could be."

The rest, as they say, is history, as the newly minted statesman, "continuing my upward trajectory," rises to become president pro tempore of the Senate and achieves various other "feats" and "distinctions" and "milestones" and "honors"—more of them "than any other Senator or any party . . . in the history of the Republic."



Byrd is also, unless THE SCRAPBOOK is mistaken, the only current senator ever to have served, back in the 1940s, as a recruiting "Kleagle" for the Ku Klux Klan. And he's the only current senator ever to have sworn, a few years later, that he would rather "die a thousand times . . . than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throwback to the blackest specimen from the wilds." And he's the only current senator to have used the N-word on national television, a "feat" he performed just this past year!

But for some reason the otherwise self-lovingly meticulous "My Story" leaves out these and other details of the great man's record on questions of race—like that Byrd led the filibuster against the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Make that "West Virginian of the Century with a Couple of Decades Dropped Politely from View." ♦

Unfair at Any Speed?

Over the last several years in New Jersey, the proposition that the Garden State's highway troopers are guilty of racial profiling became a stereotypical certainty as commonplace as assuming their penchant for bad mustaches and Krispy Kreme donuts.

But as Heather Mac Donald writes on *City Journal*'s website (*www.city-journal.org/dev/html/eon_3_27_02hm.html*), most studies purporting to prove racial profiling use "crude population measures . . . arguing, say, that if 24 percent of speeding stops on a particular stretch of highway were of black drivers, in a city or state where blacks make up 19 percent of the population, the police are over-stopping blacks. Such an analysis is clearly specious, since it fails to say what percentage of speeders are black."

On that count, score one for New Jersey police—sort of. Two years ago, the Clinton Justice Department inflicted a consent decree on the smokies, rapping their knuckles for stopping speeding blacks more than speeding whites. The bad news for anti-profiling activists is that according to a new study, blacks do speed more on Jersey highways than whites.

Commissioned by the state, the study was performed by a contractor, the Public Services Research Institute, which, over a three-month period, photographed tens of thousands of motorists on the New Jersey turnpike, while clocking them with radar guns. Defining "speeder" as someone traveling more than 15 mph over the posted speed limit, researchers found that in a 65 mph zone, blacks were nearly twice as likely to speed as whites.

This would appear to put a serious crimp in the notion that New Jersey law enforcement officials disproportionately stop black drivers based on their color, rather than their speed.

Not so, however, according to the Bush Justice Department, which has decided to handle this politically sensitive issue as if it's juggling porcupines. As the *New York Times* first reported, while the state planned to release the report in January, Mark Posner, a lawyer in the Justice Department's spe-

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cial litigation section, pressured them to withhold it, offering a laundry list of possible problems with the data, such as having to discard photographs because of weather and windshield glare (which wouldn't seem to skew results, since the sun tends to shine on everyone equally).

Predictably, the head of the state's NAACP chapter, the Rev. William Rutherford, has publicly denounced the meticulously documented study as false, even though he hasn't read it. Such unyielding bias won't qualify Rutherford for a job as a traffic empiricist, but he might want to drop a résumé off at the Justice Department's special litigation section. ♦

The Kinsley Retort

If you don't resist the temptation, you can spend a lot of time swatting down snide Michael Kinsley columns (is that a redundancy?)—but sometimes resistance is futile. Temptation in this case is Kinsley's column tweaking Virginia (Mrs. Clarence) Thomas for a March 14 op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, in which she commiserated with Judge Charles Pickering, based on his and her husband's experiences with ad hominem left-wing efforts to kill their judicial nominations (successful in Pickering's case).

Kinsley is underwhelmed by Clarence Thomas's confirmation ordeal. Indeed, he mocks Thomas as the "martyr-saint of American conservatism . . . who was pummeled so brutally by vicious gangs of Democrats and liberals—who accused him of being a right-wing ideologue with a closed mind about abortion rights, among other vicious lies—that he now lies comatose in the Supreme Court."

This must be satire. True, Thomas was *targeted* because he was opposed to abortion and racial quotas. But what he was *accused* of was something quite different: Namely, that he had once said tasteless things and was a weirdo and sex fiend. This, from the same groups who a few years later would run to embrace a president accused, by three different women, of (1) dropping his pants before a subordinate; (2) groping a volunteer who had asked his assistance; and (3) rape.

Kinsley outdoes himself in a short closing salvo, asserting that Thomas "clearly lied under oath—or at least willfully deceived—in claiming that he never discussed *Roe* v. *Wade* and had no opinion about it." Did he? No one can know other people's opinions, but a "discussion" would involve at least one other person, and frequently more. If Thomas did discuss *Roe* v. *Wade* (he was at Yale when the case was decided), how is it possible that the liberal kneecap machine, the last word on gossip and video rentals, couldn't find and bring forward one colleague or classmate to report it? Who can say that one day in the Quad—after classes—over coffee—over a beer—they had such a chat? Who can give us his words, or their general tenor? Who can give us a setting, or time? Can anyone imagine that if Thomas's enemies had found such a person, we would not already have heard sworn testimony?

The attacks on Thomas were indeed vicious. And still are. ♦

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Casual

When You're Out Of Schlitz...

There are only a few things that take me back to Milwaukee, my hometown. And except for bowling, moon boots, and watching bad football on metal bleachers in subzero temperatures, they're all comestible.

A Usinger's bratwurst. Frozen custard. A 2 lb. block of sharp cheddar just like the ones Mom used to give us chunks of when we were teething. And, of course, a good beer.

While "a good beer" means different things to different people, two beers brewed for decades in Milwaukee transcend subjectivity. Just as there is Truth, there is Good Beer; appreciation of Pabst Blue Ribbon and Schlitz is not a simple matter of taste, but of right and wrong. They are classic American brews that should be making a robust comeback in these heady days of swollen patriotism and the embrace of absolutes.

Should be—yet I've spotted a worrisome phenomenon. Signs promoting Pabst and Schlitz may beautify the walls of bars and pubs throughout greater Washington, D.C., but finding an establishment that actually serves these beers is nearly impossible.

Consider the Lost Dog Café in Arlington, Virginia. The Lost Dog is the best sandwich and pizza place within 100 miles of the capital. Order "The Phoenix," for instance, and a friendly waitress will soon deliver a warm pita stuffed with juicy, marinated chicken, lettuce, and garlic mayo, all smothered in melted mozzarella cheese. Fantastic. The White Pizza with chicken and bacon and spices—and let the record show I'm not a white-pizza guy—is enough to make you swear off tradition. And the "Dog Collars"? Tabasco-soaked onion rings that are certainly more habit-forming than any sleeping pill.

But the main reason my weekly schedule now revolves around Friday night at the Lost Dog is the beer list. It's pre-printed, on thick colored paper. The domestic selection includes some 135 beers. And that list, the bartender informs me with some pride, leaves out dozens of newly added brews. The import list can satisfy long-distance cravings from Thailand to New Zealand to Germany. I can relive the six months I spent in Europe, sitting in a wooden booth at the Lost Dog just a mile from my house. And for one hundredth of the average annual income in

Ivory Coast, Lost Dog patrons can have 22.3 ounces of that country's Mamba beer. In short, the Lost Dog has almost anything a beer connoisseur could want.

Except Schlitz. Or Pabst. This despite the fact one of the Lost Dog's largest decorative signs is a classic Schlitz ad.

Picking on the Lost Dog is perhaps unfair. After all, the restaurant's interior has a canine theme, and the Schlitz ad features two dogs sitting at a dimly lit table swilling "The beer that made Milwaukee famous." The place is so customer-friendly that I suspect with some gentle pleading—or perhaps a copy of a whiny article pointing out the contradiction—the Lost Dog would offer its customers Schlitz and PBR. That so fine an establishment could be guilty of this oversight reveals the extent of the problem, for while such false advertising was once a minor irritant, it is rapidly becoming a widespread aggravation.

Down the road just a few miles, for instance, Whitlow's on Wilson prominently features a sign for Pabst Blue Ribbon. But when I ordered one, a smug bartender—who's probably never quaffed anything other than a $7 microbrew—rolled his eyes and muttered in obvious disgust under his breath. Millie and Al's, a traditional beer and pizza joint in D.C.'s Adams Morgan neighborhood, is the same way—a big Pabst sign, but no Pabst. (They do, however, get points for serving, on tap, another vanishing classic—Miller High Life.) These deceitful decorating touches have become as cheap and inauthentic as the signs for farm equipment found in every T.G.I. Friday's.

Maybe this shouldn't be surprising—Washington is a town famous for invoking the spirit of blue-collar America, and, except for the occasional tax cut, doing very little. Politicians here, when they're not busy working on behalf of "the children . . . our future," tell us their policies will help "Joe Six-pack." In much the same way, D.C.-area bar owners trade on the retro-hip appeal of these two Milwaukee-born beers, disregarding the fact that Joe's six-pack was probably Schlitz or Pabst.

Though I'm a strong believer in markets, in this case the market needs a friendly nudge. Why not a "Schlitz night"? Buy a case of Schlitz at the grocery store for $10—yes, that's still possible even in D.C.—and sell each can for $1. Presto—a $14 profit. And any bar selling Schlitz at a buck-a-can bargain price can bet on swollen crowds on that very special night. Bowling alleys could sponsor leagues on Schlitz or Pabst nights and attendance would skyrocket.

Man, I miss Milwaukee.

Stephen F. Hayes

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You deserve a factual look at...

Terror in Israel – and in the World

Is "peace" possible under present conditions?

The news brings us daily ever more gruesome stories of the bloodlust of the Palestinians, whose suicide thugs kill and maim hundreds and who lob mortars and missiles into Israeli neighborhoods. Preferred targets of those massacres are children and teenagers. Is "peace" possible with a people who perform and condone such outrageous acts?

What are the facts?

A history of terror: Arab-Muslim terror in Israel has been going on for a very long time. Pogroms have been perpetrated on the Jewish population for almost 100 years, one of the most egregious being the carnage in Hebron in 1929, in which the Arabs killed 129 Jews and grievously wounded and maimed 399, many of them women and children. The current outrages have acquired new bloody dimensions because of theintroduction of the "suicide martyrs" and because of the weapons that the Palestinians have been able to smuggle into their territory and those that the Israelis have foolishly provided to them.

Our country has risen in justified outrage and has gone to war to pursue those who have inflicted 4,000 casualties on us. Israel has one-fiftieth of the population of the United States. The about 500 Jews who have been killed by the Palestinians in the past eighteen months corresponds to about 25,000 killed in the United States. Would the American people stand still for that? Of course not! How much forbearance does the world expect before Israel lashes out and inflicts terrible punishment on its tormentors?

These are the same people who have blown up the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, the Jewish Community Center in the same city, and the Israeli Embassy in London. Hundreds of people were killed. There can be no question that they were also behind the PanAm flight 103 plane explosion which killed 270 people, mostly Americans; that they were responsible for the blowing up of the Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia, in which 19 Air Force personnel died; and in literally hundreds of other acts of terror. All of these terror acts are specifically authorized by Yassir Arafat. That is a man who until not too long ago was classified as an international terrorist by the U.S. State Department. That he has received the Nobel Peace Price must be considered a cosmic joke.

Any pretext suffices. The basic understanding with Arafat and his Palestinian Arabs was that terror and mayhem would stop after the signing of the Oslo Agreement. That has not happened. On the contrary, more Jews have been killed by terror attacks since the famous handshake between the late Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin and Yassir Arafat than in any comparable period before it. Arafat and the "Palestinian Authority" do nothing to stop this slaughter; on the contrary, they actively encourage their followers to use violence to accomplish their ends. In blood-curdling speeches, Arafat and hishenchman goad their followers into violence, urging them to "liberate Palestine by jihad (holy war) with blood and with fire."

The current rampage was supposedly triggered by Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. And why shouldn't he visit the Temple Mount? It's in Israel, isn't it? The Arabs-Muslims can visit any place in Israel, without anybody standing in their way. Were it not for that freedom, there would be no suicide bombers. The dreadful acts of slaughter are committed because of the undying hatred of the Jews, a hatred that permeates the Muslim world. The purpose is to kill and maim as many Jews as possible.

> " Israel should respond harshly to any further provocations and should not enter into any further negotiations with the Palestine Authority and with Yassir Arafat – a blood-stained terrorist. "

And that is the nub of the problem. Only the most naïve can any longer believe that the Palestinian Arabs (or the rest of the Arab-Muslim world) can be placated by the Israelis bringing further "sacrifices for peace." The Arabs will not be satisfied with any piece of land. Even if the Israeli Jews were prepared to hand over the entire land of Israel to the Arabs and only retain perhaps, the enclave of Tel Aviv, it would not suffice. The elimination of any Jewish vestige is the inalterable goal.

The presence of Jews in the Middle East is an unacceptable thorn in the side of the Arabs – an insult that must be avenged and eliminated. But, of course, no peace can come about until that attitude and mindset change. And that may take a very long time.

Regardless of what other proposals may be put on the table by well-meaning (and sometimes not so well-meaning) third parties, the Palestinians having their own governance and living side by side with Israel in harmony and co-prosperity is simply not possible at the present time. Former prime minister Ehud Barak, under the insistent pressure of former president Clinton, offered breathtaking concessions to the Palestinians, concessions that would have fulfilled virtually all of their stated aspirations, including even the de facto partition of Jerusalem. But Mr. Arafat haughtily rejected them and unleashed his bloody intifada instead. Israel should respond harshly to any further provocations and should not enter into any further negotiations with the Palestine Authority and with Yassir Arafat, because he is not a nation builder but a blood-stained terrorist, the perfect counterpart to Osama bin Laden. Nobody, not the United States, nor any other country, nor the United Nations should be the arbiter of Israel's destiny. Only Israel should determine whether its national rights and its security requirements are being honored and fulfilled. Only then, and not before, should Israel be prepared to continue any negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs and, hopefully, not with Arafat, but with a more enlightened successor.

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Unholy Sacrifice

David Gelernter writes that the Muslim vision of "heaven as a whorehouse" may be "the most loathsome idea in the history of human thought." It is also one of the silliest ("The Suicide of the Palestinians," March 25). I fear, though, that the motivation behind Palestinian—and Islamic—suicide murderers is far more sinister.

Murder by suicide simultaneously liberates the self from some evil enemy within and without. That evil "other"—Americans, Jews—has taken command of one's very self and must be extirpated; one's soul must be purged. The Muslim who does this simultaneously defies two divine commandments: against murder and suicide. The act may thus also be seen as rebellious liberation from submission to the will of Allah. In a culture devoid of the idea of constituted political liberty and self-government, this may be the only liberty, the only meaningful rebellion, available. Although it appears to be impious, it in fact appeals to a higher piety—the liberation of the nation and the fatherland. Thus the act of impiety takes the form of piety. The higher piety is, of course, nationalism, which originally was not piety at all, but a movement of secularization imported from the West.

How nationalism became Islamic has become a question of compelling intellectual interest since September 11, but the practical result is that Palestinian nationalism is now taught as a form of Islamic piety, or more precisely, pious impiety, which absolves the highest criminality in advance. Religiously, this may be described as ecstatic hatred. It may be helpful to the hater to believe that Allah loves his hatred and will reward him with "good sex." Far more important is that the hater loves his hatred; it is his goodness, his redemption, and his virtue.

Robert A. Licht
Deerfield, IL

It seems there is a major typo in the title of David Gelernter's article—the title should be "The Suicide of the Israelis," not "The Suicide of the Palestinians."

Gelernter observes that "Appeasement doesn't merely fail to prevent catastrophe, it provokes catastrophe." But appeasement has been Israel's guiding principle since its inception. Israel has engaged in war only as a last resort, never seriously punishing her enemies, but rather rewarding them with territory, oil fields, and guns, while her citizens endure the catastrophe her appeasement has wrought. The Arabs correctly interpret this appeasement as a sign of weakness, one that will incite them to yet further aggression.

Lynn Field
Monroe Township, NJ

David Gelernter decries Palestinian violence against Israelis as barbarism. While I do not condone the actions of the Palestinian suicide

bombers who have attacked civilians, I see barbarism on the part of the Israelis and the U.S. media, too.

The Israeli armed forces attack unarmed civilians with automatic weapons, tanks, and helicopters. For their part, the U.S. media neglect to report the horrendous circumstances under which the Palestinians live and die, as if they were not as human or as important as the Israelis.

Over 700 Palestinians have died since the current intifada began. Most are innocent victims of the Israeli forces or are armed settlers. How can we not consider this barbarous as well?

Michelle Hartner
Madison, WI

In his "The Suicide of the Palestinians," David Gelernter indicates that Israel has become especially dangerous for Jews in the last few decades, and that before then, life was safer. I'm not so sure this is true.

There was anti-Jewish/Zionist violence in the Middle East throughout the 20th century. In 1921 in the month of May alone, Arab mobs killed 90 Jews and injured 289 more, and this is when the Jews didn't have a government to protect them. This kind of violence (either from mobs, terrorists, or the surrounding countries) is something that Zionists and Israelis have always had to deal with.

Many aspects of the current intifada are new. A dangerous life for Jews is unfortunately not one of them.

Chris Speck
Durham, NC

The Words You Say

Fred Barnes says the United States should memorialize September 11 in as many ways as possible, at every possible opportunity ("Never Forget," March 25). One way to remember September 11 is to not refer to it as "September 11."

We don't talk about December 7, but about Pearl Harbor. September 11 was not merely a date on which something happened. The United States was attacked. Let's talk about that day as the al Qaeda attacks or, perhaps, as the Islamist attack on the United States. We could just say the World Trade Center attacks, but that leaves out the Pentagon and the unknown fourth target. The words we use to ourselves and aloud can help us remember what is at stake.

Joseph Shier
Toronto, Canada

Microsoft Softy

In discussing Microsoft's future product development efforts, Einer Elhauge jumps too far into micro-details ("Soft on Microsoft," March 25). As a longtime technologist in the field, I recognize that such attempts to make Microsoft share its code and the like are not likely to achieve positive results for consumers and may be deleterious.

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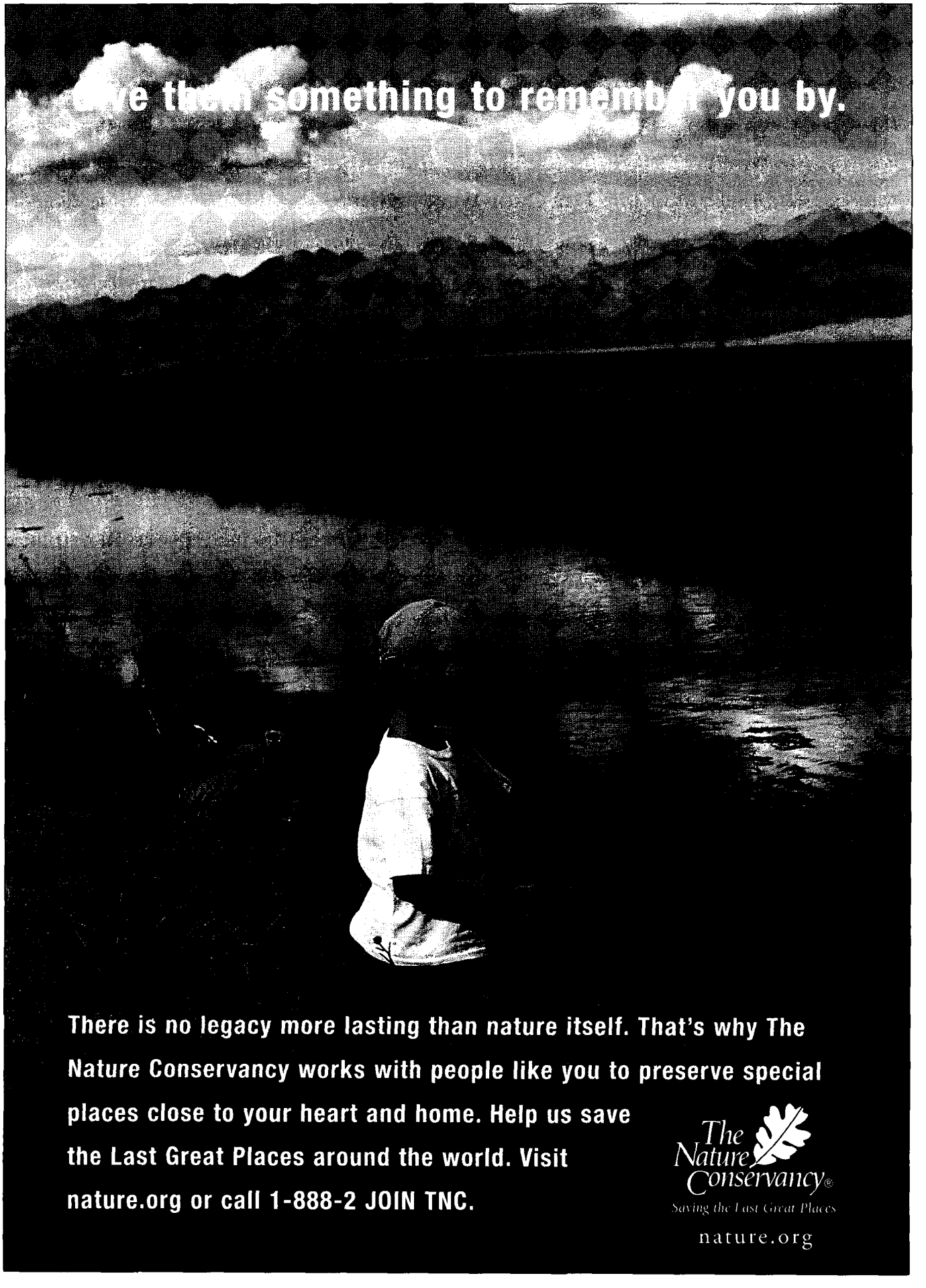

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Antitrust law can be a sledgehammer in the hands of a ham-handed Justice Department or state attorney general. Microsoft itself is the result of a previous misguided Justice Department antitrust action. Despite its later success with Windows and other technology, Microsoft owes its existence to MS-DOS. When IBM was searching for an operating system for its nascent personal computer, it was still under an earlier Justice Department antitrust investigation that had been ongoing for more than a decade. To avoid prejudicing its continuing litigation by appearing to be a monopolist, IBM elected to license the PC's operating system from Microsoft rather than buy it outright or develop its own.

IBM later went on to settle with the Justice Department without foul, and Microsoft went on to achieve fame and fortune it perhaps would never otherwise have attained.

While it might be argued that an antitrust case's resulting in the formation of Microsoft was a positive for the nation and the economy, clearly the blind application of antitrust law can have unanticipated consequences. Antitrust law needs to be applied carefully so that an existing enterprise is not humbled in ways that disturb the natural forces of our capitalist economy.

WALTER M. ANDERSON
Bedford, MA

CHEAP SHOTS

SINCE WHEN does THE WEEKLY STANDARD traffic in "humor" about illness and physical characteristics ("Janet Reno Rides Again," March 25)? How sophomoric of Matt Labash to state that "Reno's hands sometimes shake so much that each one looks as if it's trying to clap itself." How about: "Reno timbered backwards, uttered 'Damn' on the way down, and provided a disastrous CNN visual: the candidate sprawled on her back, her size-13 gunboats peeping out from behind the rostrum"?

This isn't journalism, and it certainly isn't funny—at least not by the standards of anyone with common decency. Unable to do the customary hatchet job on Democratic morality, Labash resorts to mocking Janet Reno's rectitude in obeying traffic lights, speed limits, and security sign-in procedures.

MADELINE NESSE
Silver Spring, MD

THE CHOP WON'T STOP

CONCERNING the SCRAPBOOK item "Chop Till You Drop" (April 1): As a card-carrying member of the Blackfeet Indian Tribe, I am thankful someone finally discovered that most of us aren't offended by Native American names being used by sports teams. I am only offended if the team doesn't have a winning season.

DONNA HUTCHINSON
Washington, DC

THE TERM NATIVE AMERICAN is charmingly indicative of the politically correct movement. Apparently, the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere were given this tag by none other than the politically incorrect Chris Columbus. Columbus mistakenly thought he'd landed in the East Indies. So he called the people he found "Indians." Not a terribly bad mistake since neither Columbus nor anyone else on the planet knew where he was at the time. This includes, of course, the inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere.

Today the P.C. mob objects to the term "Indian." Of course, the name "America" was coined by the German cartographer Martin Waldenmuller in 1507 in honor of the Florentine navigator Amerigo Vespucci. It seems no worse to be named as a result of a legitimate geographical error than to be named after a dead Italian.

TIM HEEKIN
Morrow, OH

UNFRIENDLY AIRLINES

IRWIN M. STELZER's analysis of the problems of the airline industry is fine as far as it goes ("Flying the Bankrupt Skies," Feb. 25). However, in trying to explain decreased passenger loads, he overlooks a significant factor in the reason many travelers are staying away: the chaotic nature of the so-called enhanced security precautions. It is clear to any frequent flyer that most of what passes for increased security is merely cosmetic. The same uneducated, rude people are still running the security screening, except now they have even more power to harass and detain passengers. They now search old ladies and young children, while Saudi nationals breeze through the lines without so much as a glance because we're afraid of "racial profiling."

Almost no one I've talked to thinks that anything has changed, except for the length of the lines. As a result, a short flight from Washington to Boston is now a half-day journey. As recently as a few weeks ago, I spent more time in airport security lines than I did on the plane. As long as this keeps up, I am staying at home.

MATTHEW HARRINGTON
Washington, DC

IGNORE FRENCH BLATHER

TOD LINDBERG's "America Knows Terrorism" (March 25) is a rare but wonderful thing: an article that captures the key elements of an issue clearly and succinctly.

I wish, however, that I could share Lindberg's concluding optimism regarding the French. He writes, ". . . the memory of Algeria and worse will lead France to forswear sophistication and lend a hand." While it seems that the French population is largely behind the United States in our war on terror, their government relies upon its ability to generate headlines as proof of its significance in world events. The blathering of the French government should be ignored—particularly by the media—in the hopes that it will go away.

STEPHEN L. CHAMBERS
Cypress, TX

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the weekly Standard

The Detour

On the evidence of the past couple of weeks, there's one person above all on the Bush foreign policy team whom we can trust to wage the war on terrorism effectively—without debilitating self-delusions, without crippling moral confusion, without self-defeating serpentine maneuvering, but rather with clarity, determination, and unwavering commitment to a few basic principles. The good news is that this person is George W. Bush. The bad news is that the president occasionally defers to his colleagues when he should trust his own judgment.

We're going to go out on a limb and assert that the unfortunate detour in America's war on terrorism of the past two weeks—a detour that began with Vice President Cheney's ill-fated trip to the Middle East and ended, we hope, with last week's Arab League summit farce—was not President Bush's idea. Indeed, there is anecdotal evidence that the president was never entirely comfortable with the way his lieutenants handled their little foray into Middle East diplomacy. For instance, we don't believe that Bush, left to his own devices, would have chosen to make the United States the protector and deliverer of Yasser Arafat at the same time that terrorists sponsored by Arafat were massacring innocent Israeli civilians. Bush had shunned Arafat throughout his presidency, and it's common knowledge that the president pretty much washed his hands of the Palestinian leader after Arafat lied to him in early January about the huge shipment of arms from Iran aboard the Palestinian freighter *Karine A*. At a press conference last week, Bush revealed his discomfort with his administration's sudden quasi-embrace of Arafat, saying, "I, frankly, have been disappointed in his performance." When asked why he had changed his policy toward Arafat, Bush said it was Dick Cheney's idea: "I've always been one that trusts the judgment of people I send on a mission. . . . And I trust the vice president's judgment. He's a man of enormous experience who's got a good feel for things."

The terrorists were emboldened, on the one hand, and the United States was held in contempt, on the other. Not bad for two weeks' work.

Be that as it may, the past two weeks have been amateur hour in American diplomacy. The patently cynical effort to curry favor with the Saudi royal family, and thus theoretically buy a few months of relative quiet in the Middle East, went the way of all patently cynical efforts. It backfired. Violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories has increased; U.S. influence in the region is diminished; and overall, Arab hostility to both Israel and the United States is higher than it was before Cheney's trip.

The press and foreign policy establishment wants, of course, to absolve the newly peace-processing administration of responsibility for this bad state of affairs, just as they absolved the Clinton administration after the breakdown of Mideast peace talks in July 2000. An American administration always gets praised for "giving peace a chance," no matter how inept the execution or how cynical the motive, or indeed no matter whether the American effort actually helps or harms the chances for peace.

But make no mistake: The Bush administration's ham-handed diplomacy of the past two weeks has done harm, with no compensating good. By first raising and then dashing Arab expectations that the United States would force Sharon to let Arafat go to Beirut, the administration pulled off a rare feat. It managed to convince Palestinian militias that their terror was paying off, and that at the very least the United States would turn a blind eye to terrorist acts in the distant hope of "getting into Tenet" and then "into Mitchell." At the same time, the Arab dictators also concluded that, however much the United States might want to pressure Israel in order to curry favor with them, America finally did not have either the will or the power to force Sharon to let Arafat go. So the terrorists were emboldened, on the one hand, and the United States was held in contempt, on the other. Not bad for two weeks' work.

And for what? So the Bush administration could orchestrate the Arab League's acceptance of the Saudi peace initiative? That Saudi proposal is, and always was, a dead letter, notwithstanding its orgasmic reception by the

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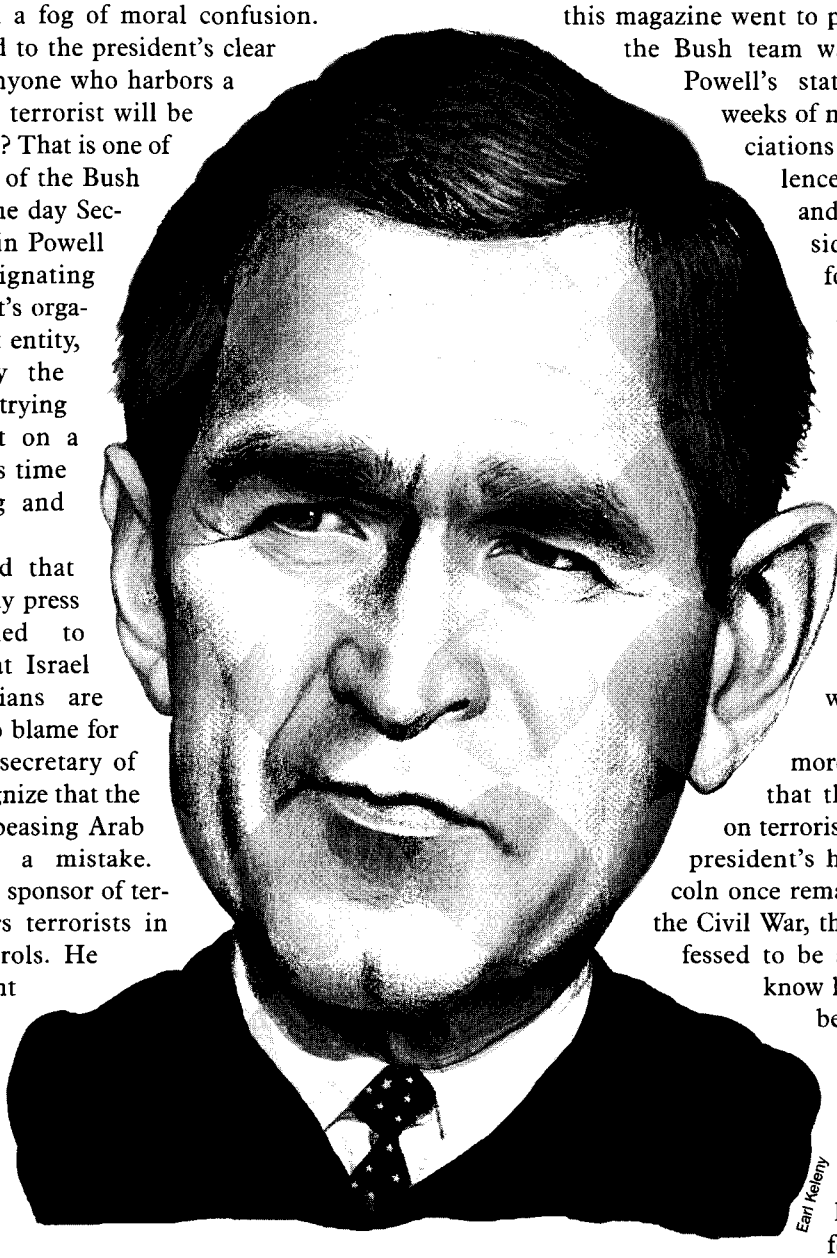
New York Times and CNN. Now the Arab League has endorsed it. So what? Given the current level of violence in Israel, we doubt whether anyone will even remember the Saudi plan in two weeks. All the Bush administration's clever maneuvering did not buy even a few days of quiet and Arab goodwill, much less a few months.

But if we didn't buy anything, we paid quite a bit. Not since September 11 has the Bush administration so enveloped itself in a fog of moral confusion. Whatever happened to the president's clear formulation that anyone who harbors a terrorist or helps a terrorist will be treated as a terrorist? That is one of the core principles of the Bush Doctrine. Yet on one day Secretary of State Colin Powell was officially designating one of Yasser Arafat's organizations a terrorist entity, and the next day the administration was trying to help Arafat get on a plane to Beirut. It's time for plain speaking and plain thinking.

We're heartened that Powell, at his Friday press conference, seemed to reject the idea that Israel and the Palestinians are somehow equally to blame for the violence. The secretary of state may now recognize that the detour towards appeasing Arab intransigence was a mistake. Arafat, after all, is a sponsor of terrorism. He harbors terrorists in territories he controls. He oversees the payment and supply of terrorists. Does the Bush Doctrine apply to Yasser Arafat or not?

And what of the president's powerful declaration, in his "Axis of Evil" speech, that he intended to help those in the Muslim world struggling for freedom against tyranny? The last two weeks have been a love-fest between administration officials and Middle Eastern tyrants. We understand that the State Department believes we need to win over the Saudis in order to be able to carry out a military mission in Iraq. But at the end of the day, the Saudis will support the United States in Iraq not because they like us, and not because we promise them a Palestinian state, but only because we leave them no choice. Only because we make it clear, as Bush has done in his simple but profound way, that in the war on terrorism they can either be with us or against us.


Earl Keleny

We trust the damage done in the past two weeks can be repaired and that the administration can find its way back to the straight route President Bush had charted. As this magazine went to press, it appeared that the Bush team was correcting course. Powell's statement Friday, after weeks of morally neutral denunciations of the "cycle of violence," came down firmly and unequivocally on the side of Israel, as Israeli forces began a campaign to break the Arafat-sponsored terror network. We hope Israel succeeds. And we hope the Bush administration provides full support for Israel's war on terrorism. Whether we like it or not, their war is now indisputably our war.

Meanwhile, we are more convinced than ever that the success of the war on terrorism rests entirely in the president's hands. President Lincoln once remarked, in the midst of the Civil War, that he had "never professed to be a military man or to know how campaigns should be conducted," but that circumstances had forced him to play an active role in the prosecution of the Civil War nevertheless—at least until he found a general who could win the war for him. In truth, no one in America understood the meaning of the Civil War, and what would be necessary to win it, better than Lincoln. Today, we strongly suspect that no one understands the war on terrorism, and how to win it, better than George W. Bush. Let's hope that from now on he trusts his own understanding.

—Robert Kagan and William Kristol

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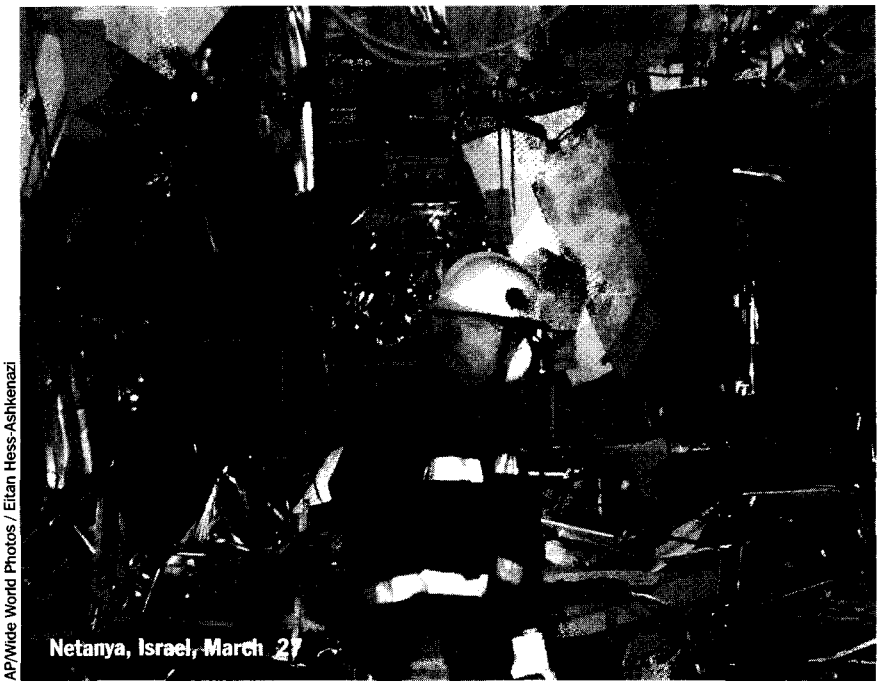
The Front Line in the War on Terror

It's Israel now, not Afghanistan.

BY MARSHALL WITTMANN



AP/Wide World Photos / Eitan Hess-Ashkenazi

Netanya, Israel, March 27

THE FRONT LINES in the war against terror are no longer in the mountains of Afghanistan, but rather in the streets of Israel. Since America was attacked in September, both friends and adversaries of Israel have attempted to deny the link between America's war on terror and the dispute in the Middle East. After all, Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda were more focused on removing American influence from the Islamic world than promoting the Palestinian cause. But increasingly, there appears to be a real nexus—call it an axis—between al Qaeda and its sister terrorist networks, the key Israel-hating and terrorist-sponsoring regimes of the Middle East, and Arafat's Palestinian Authority and its instruments. The assault on Israeli civilians is now the cutting edge of the axis of evil.

Marshall Wittmann is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

Thus, the *New York Times* recently cited American and Israeli officials' fears of an alliance linking Iran, Arafat, and al Qaeda: "Israeli officials say they are alarmed by Mr. Arafat's alliance with Iran because they say it gives the Palestinians a powerful and well-armed patron in the increasingly violent conflict with Israel. American officials echoed that concern and said they were also worried by intelligence reports that say Tehran is harboring al Qaeda members, including one leader who recently tried to mount an attack against Israel from his sanctuary in Iran."

Of course, we should not be surprised by the alliance of the anti-Israel Islamists. Early on, bin Laden signaled that his enemies were the "Crusaders and the Jews." The captured arms shipment of the *Karine A* confirmed the link between the Palestinian Authority and Iran. Yet the Bush administration has resisted calling attention to this Middle East anti-Israel terror axis, fearing to alienate the so-called moderate Arabs. To assuage Muslim opinion, the president even endorsed a Palestinian state. Hamas and Hezbollah were not initially placed on the list of terrorist organizations for financial crackdowns, and the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades were only recently named. Other Arafat-controlled organizations are still in the clear.

The expressions of joy in the "Palestinian street" over the attacks on New York and the Pentagon were an early signal that the Palestinians were likely to aid bin Laden's terrorist war. If the foreign policy sophisticates in Washington did not understand the link between the Palestinian cause and al Qaeda, the Arab masses were not confused.

More important, the Palestinian organizations, including Arafat's own groups, escalated their campaign of blood and terror against Israeli civilians. While the Bush administration has displayed moral clarity in the U.S. war against the Taliban, the American response to the Israeli defense has often tended in the direction of flaccid moral equivalence decrying the "cycle of violence." Absent in the American response to Palestinian terror has been the determined resolve that the United States has shown in Afghanistan. While America hurled missiles against the Taliban, the Bush administration urged Israelis to enter the peace process with their own terrorists.

And while American and, to a lesser extent, Western public opinion remains outraged about the September 11 atrocities, the world is increasingly jaded and inured to the carnage in Israel. One frequently hears commentators lament the violence on "both sides," as if there were no moral distinction between targeting civilians and inadvertently killing

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innocents while pursuing terrorists.

Slowly but surely, a central objective of bin Laden and al Qaeda is being achieved. While we are scoring victories in the Afghan theater, we are losing on the Middle Eastern front in the war against terror. Terror has achieved its aim—its placement on the same moral plane as the civilized response to terror. The West has agreed to negotiate with terror. America has embraced a so-called Saudi peace plan that would result in a truncated, indefensible Israel. In return, have the Saudis condemned Palestinian terror? Have they stopped inciting terror through their media, to say nothing of their massive funding of extremist organizations throughout the Islamic world?

The Bush administration has wanted to see the Israeli-Palestinian dispute as a diversion from its central objective of eliminating the Taliban and eventually removing Saddam. The strategy has been to lower the temperature in Israel and thereby create the circumstances for a coalition for regime change in Iraq. But what if our enemies have shifted the front against the United States and the West to the streets of Israel? The goal of the radical Islamists has always been to rid the Muslim world of Western influence. Why not move the fight to the venue where the West is divided and lacks clarity? Even the hard-line vice president of the United States failed to condemn the Saudi-published anti-Semitic hate that is breeding suicide bombers when he was presented with that opportunity recently on *Meet the Press*.

The goal of radical Islamists has always been to rid the Muslim world of Western influence. Why not move the fight to a venue where the West is divided?

Bin Laden and his fellow travelers in Hamas and Fatah, as well as in Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere in the Muslim world, recognize the deep historical ambiguity in the West over the Jews. By focusing terror on Israel, they seek of course to weaken Israel, but also to confuse what had seemed to be an unambiguous war on terror. A loss of moral clarity in the Middle East would undo all the good that has been done by our military victories in Afghanistan and the president's impressive speeches at home. In the last couple of weeks, it has seemed for the first time since September 11 that Osama bin Laden and his allies in the Muslim world are not on the run, but on a run. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Propaganda by the Column Inch

The *Financial Times* "seems to many" like an apologist for terror. **BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL**

LONDON'S *Financial Times*, read by more and more American businessmen, does not have a reputation for remoteness from the facts. But it is in the process of acquiring one. On March 28, the *FT* published a piece of terrorist propaganda under the guise of news. In an article entitled "US Muslims see their American dreams die," reporter Nancy Dunne attacked the U.S. Customs Service's Operation Green Quest, a four-month-old investigation into the financing of terrorism. Since its launch in November, Green Quest has, according to Dunne, "seized about $10.3m in smuggled US currency and $4.3m in other assets. Its work has resulted in 21 searches, 12 arrests and four indictments."

That doesn't sound bad, considering that Green Quest is part of a desperately important counterinsurgency campaign: only a couple dozen raids, with the average one resulting in a half-million dollars of confiscations, and a fifty-fifty chance of arrests. One could even point to these numbers as evidence of complacency. But Dunne will have none of it. She'd apparently rather see our Customs agents confiscating prosciutto from old ladies tottering off the return flight from Rome. In particular, she is angered by the spate of searches that took place March 20 against alleged terrorist front groups in Northern Virginia and Georgia. Dunne describes these groups' personnel as "some of the region's most respected Muslim leaders." If terrorism is not the real threat, according to Dunne, then the raids have an ulterior—and probably racist—motive. "After the [September 11] attacks," she warns, "the nightmare of detention camps, such as those employed against Japanese Americans in the second world war, has seemed to many like a real threat."

"Seemed"? "Many"? Who are the reporter's sources here?

Well, outside of a post-September 11 statement from Amnesty International, she has five. One is Michigan congressman John Conyers, who says, "The suggestion that Arab and Muslim Americans appreciate being singled out and interrogated is a prime example of the attorney-general's wartime propaganda machine in full swing." One is Mohamed Majad of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, who says that Muslim children "are afraid to sleep at night"—presumably for fear of midnight raids.

And the other three of her sources come from CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Dunne names CAIR without describing it, so it sounds like an academic conclave rather than what it actually is: a political pressure group that has as a primary purpose carping about the investigation of the September 11 atrocities. Dunne quotes a CAIR communiqué to the effect that the Virginia institutions raided last week were all "respected Islamic institutions." She quotes Nihad Awad, the group's executive director: "He said he explained [to other Moslems] that the [U.S.] government had slipped into the control of 'the extremists.'" She quotes Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's spokesman, who said that a recent raid of a Georgia poultry business shows that "they [the Green Quest task force] are afraid of terrorist chickens." Har, har, har.

If Dunne is aware of the American law-enforcement rationale for the raids, she does not share it with her readers. She tells us nothing about the foundations raided. She uses sneer quotes to dispute the U.S. government's account that many of the charities these leaders run are only "so-called" relief operations.

This kind of rhetorical snickering is possible only if you ignore a growing pile of evidence. (That some charities have been used as terrorist fronts is not doubted by any serious observer, as Stephen Schwartz's article on Page 15 makes clear.) On the Wednesday of the raids, former federal prosecutor and war-crimes investigator John Loftus had filed a lawsuit in Florida. Loftus alleges links between Florida agitator Sami Al-Arian and a larger extremist network funded through Saudi money laundering. This network is what was raided on March 20. Al-Arian's involvement in fund-raising for Middle Eastern terrorism has been documented on publicly available videotape and also, Loftus alleges, in tapped phone calls. Loftus said on *The O'Reilly Factor* that a Justice Department official had sought to dissuade him from filing the suit by assuring him that Al-Arian-linked groups would be raided.

Al-Arian was the founder of the World Islamic Studies Enterprise (WISE), shut down in the mid-1990s under Justice Department suspicion that it was serving as a terrorist front. The International Institute of Islamic Thought—one of the "respected Islamic institutions" raided in Virginia on March 20—was identified by former WISE employees as the main source of the group's funding. (Most of what we know about WISE and its links to terror comes from the excellent beat reporting of the *Tampa Tribune*'s Michael Fechter.) What's more, a link between al Qaeda and the Saudi-funded Muslim World League—another Virginia-based "respected Islamic institution"—is documented in Steven Emerson's

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recent book *American Jihad*. Al Qaeda co-founder Wael Jalaidan was in recent years the head of the MWL's Pakistan headquarters in Islamabad.

A problem with Dunne's kind of vigorously slanted "adversarial" journalism, of course, is that by presenting the CAIRs of the world as typical of American Muslim opinion, it fosters the very sort of hostility it purports to diagnose. The danger lies less in the ideological bias of reporters than in the blockheaded crudeness with which that bias is expressed. Even outspoken Muslims are losing their patience with the press's one-dimensional sourcing of stories.

Khalid Duran, editor of *TransIslam* magazine, lamented in late February that he himself had condemned terrorism at every turn, but that the newspapers were disinclined to print his comments. "The media here has been throughout supporting the so-called Islamists," Duran said, "those extremists, those people who run around here in Washington who—whose mindset does not differ from those terrorists who attacked on September 11. But they are feted in the White House, they are taken into the State Department and being received over there. The same kind of people with the same ideology, they are given all the publicity in the press." Duran, it must be added, holds the absurd idea that the media collude in portraying Arabs as crazies, in order to drive up support for Israel. But his larger point—that al Qaeda's fellow travelers have an easier time getting into print than its Muslim opponents—bears listening to.

Whether or not you consider the Islamist threat sufficient to justify federal raids is a legitimate question. But to pooh-pooh the threat itself is an insult to the common sense of the American people. A democracy accepts such insults at its peril. The *Financial Times*'s reporting on the March 20 raids raises important questions, as undoubtedly it sought to. Unfortunately, the most important of the questions it raises is: *Just how stupid do they think we are?* ♦

Wahhabis in the Old Dominion

What the federal raids in Northern Virginia uncovered. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT has kicked over quite an anthill in Northern Virginia. A U.S. Treasury task force, Operation Green Quest, has been investigating the funding of Islamic terror. Raids on March 20 struck an extraordinary array of financial, charitable, and ostensibly religious entities identified with Muslim and Arab concerns in this country, most of them headquartered in Northern Virginia.

Reaction to the raids suggests the Feds inflicted serious injury on the Wahhabi lobby, the Saudi-backed extremist network that largely controls Islam in America. Officials of the targeted groups as well as their non-Muslim apologists—notably GOP operative Grover Norquist, the chief enabler of Islamic extremists seeking access to the White House—have condemned the raids as civil rights violations.

The convoluted system of interlocking directorates, global banking transactions, and ideological activities exposed in Northern Virginia will take time to sort out. Operation Green Quest has drawn attention to a previously overlooked aspect of support for extremism in this country: The principal threat comes not from the thousands of working-class Arab immigrants in places like New Jersey and Michigan who contribute modest sums to the so-called Islamic charities, but from the Arab elite.

The Saudis stand behind all of it. The kingdom pledged $400 million last year for the support of "martyrs' families," according to the Saudi Embassy website. At $5,300 per "martyr," that works out to about 75,000 martyrs, suggesting the Saudi princes anticipate a lot more suicide bombings than Israel has yet suffered. The Saudis offered a fraudulent "peace" plan this year intended to divert attention from their involvement in the horrors of September 11.

The keystone of the Saudi-sponsored Northern Virginia network is the Saar Foundation, created by Suleiman Abdul Al-Aziz al-Rajhi, a scion of one of the richest Saudi families. The Saar Foundation is connected to Al-Taqwa, a shell company formerly based in Switzerland, where its leading figures included a notorious neo-Nazi and Islamist, Ahmed Huber. Subsequently moved to the United States, Al-Taqwa was shut down after September 11 and its assets frozen by U.S. presidential order. But operations continued, as the Wahhabi lobby shifted to its backup institutions here.

Saar has also been linked to Khalid bin Mahfouz, former lead financial adviser to the Saudi royal family and ex-head of the National Commercial Bank of Saudi Arabia. Mahfouz has been named by French intelligence as a backer of Osama bin Laden; Mahfouz endowed the Muwafaq Foundation, which U.S. authorities confirm was an arm of bin Laden's terror organization. Muwafaq's former chief, Yassin al-Qadi, oversaw the financial penetration of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania by Wahhabi terrorists in the late 1990s.

Men like al-Rajhi, Mahfouz, and al-Qadi are the big players in the

Stephen Schwartz's new book, The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud From Tradition to Terror, *is forthcoming.*

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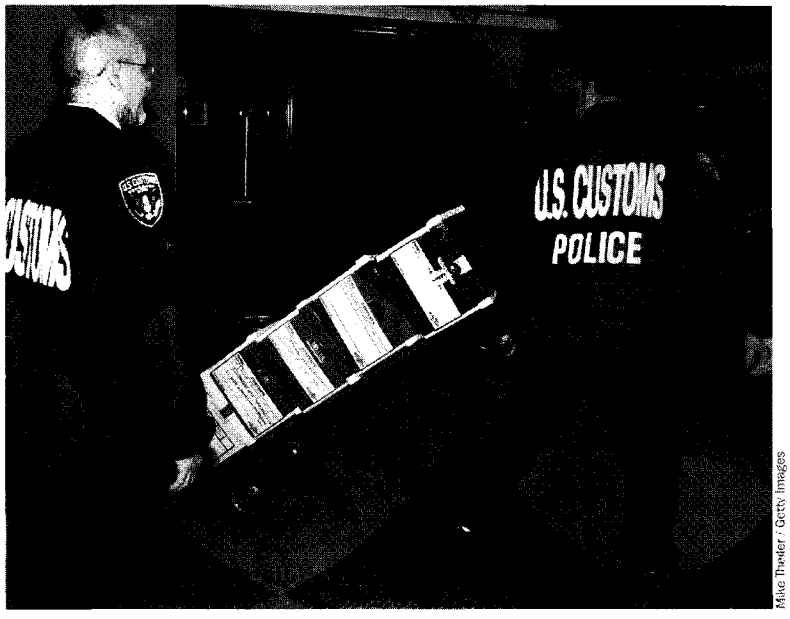
financing of Islamic extremism. And their paths repeatedly lead back to Northern Virginia. They don't play for small stakes: Saar received *$1.7 billion* in donations in 1998, although this was left out of the foundation's tax filings until 2000. No explanation has been offered for this bit of accounting sorcery.

A major personality on the ground in Virginia is an individual named Jamal Barzinji, whose office in Herndon was a major target of the raids. In 1980, he was listed in local public records as a representative of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), an arm of the Saudi regime with offices in Virginia. WAMY has been deeply involved in providing cover for Wahhabi terrorism. The 2002 entry in the U.S. Business Directory lists the president of the WAMY office in Annandale, Va., as Abdula bin Laden—the terrorist's younger brother.

Barzinji serves as a trustee and officer of the Amana Mutual Funds Trust, a growth and income mutual fund headquartered in Bellingham, Wash., conveniently near the Canadian border. Amana's board also includes Yaqub Mirza, a Pakistani physicist who shares Barzinji's Herndon office address and who is widely described as a financial genius. Another board member and tenant in the Herndon office is Samir Salah. He formerly ran a branch of Al-Taqwa in the Caribbean, heads a financial firm linked to Saar, and directs Dar al-Hijra, a mosque in Falls Church, Va., notable for hardline Wahhabi preaching. Salah is also deeply involved with Taibah International Aid Association, a Virginia charity with a Bosnian branch that is being investigated by authorities in Sarajevo.

Front groups interfacing between the Wahhabi-Saudi money movers under federal suspicion and the broader American public include two institutions active in the religious field: the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS). The involvement of GSISS with the financing of extremism is especially startling in that it alone is credentialed by the Department of Defense to certify Muslim chaplains for the U.S. armed forces. Barzinji has appeared on the boards of both.



Mike Theiler / Getty Images

The March 20 "Green Quest" raid, Herndon, Virginia.

The day of the raids, Barzinji appeared on U.S. television news insisting he knew of no questionable behavior by the groups under scrutiny, and promising full cooperation with the authorities. But in a familiar pattern of duplicity, he expressed himself quite differently in the Islamic media. Barzinji told the Internet news service Islam Online (*www. islam-online.net*) he believed the investigations fulfilled the will not of the Bush administration, but of "elements within the government, media, and [academia] who were unhappy with the positive attention being given to Muslims." This tortured formulation, repeated in several variations, embodies the Islamist fantasy that every doubt cast on the activities of the Wahhabi lobby is the product of Jewish influence.

Speaking to Islam Online, Barzinji spelled out his anxieties. He alleged that the real powers behind the raids were "self-styled Middle East 'experts,'" individuals "who do not want to see Muslims develop such excellent relations with the government, assuming political rights." This line simply dumbs down one peddled by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which condemns any challenge to the Wahhabi lobby as a product of "right-wing commentators."

Barzinji, CAIR, and their cohort give the impression of living in their own conspiratorial world, divorced from reality. For them to imagine that the aftermath of September 11 has been anything but disastrous for the image and credibility of American Muslims is absurd. The presumption that anybody outside government dictates policy to the Treasury, however, is only the classic supposition about alleged Israeli influence that infests the Arab mind.

Perhaps it's to be expected that the Wahhabi lobby would react to a federal investigation with its usual combination of pseudopatriotic protest, claims of innocence, and paranoia. But perhaps the White House might suggest to friends like Norquist that they should stop trying to protect enablers of terrorism.

Otherwise, more and more people will wonder whether the administration really understands the problems afflicting Islam in the United States, and whether it really is united in resisting the influence of the extremists. ♦

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Vive le terrorisme!

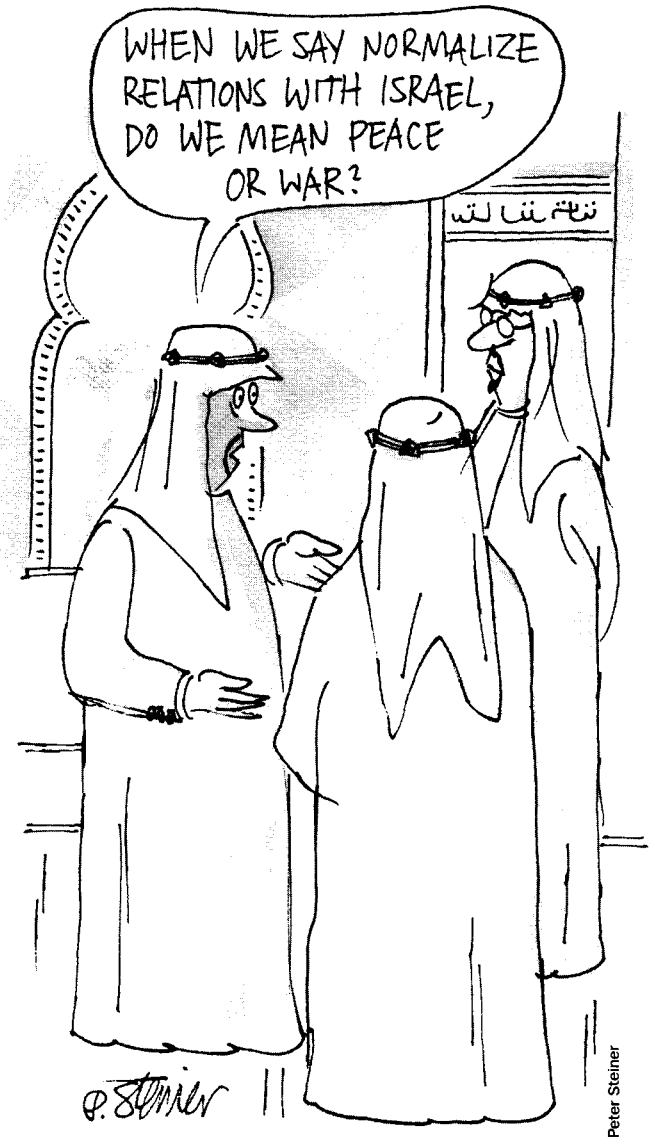
The European Union is reluctant to defund Palestinian violence. BY ELI J. LAKE

WHEN PALESTINIAN suicide bomber Abdel-Basset Odeh, a member of the Hamas military wing known as the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, walked into the Park Hotel in Netanya on the first night of Passover last week and blew himself up along with 20 Israelis, he probably did his own family a service. The pattern in such deadly attacks has been for a network of relief organizations to provide the families of suicide bombers generous stipends, creating an incentive for young Palestinians to martyr themselves and murder Israeli civilians.

The money for the martyrs' families comes from Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and sometimes even the United States, as last year's investigation into the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation revealed. But another source of cash for these operations is charities in Western Europe. And unlike Washington, the European Union has so far been unwilling to freeze assets associated with individuals and organizations connected to leading terrorists operating against Israel.

Matthew Levitt, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and until earlier this year an FBI specialist in tracking the financial assets of terrorists, said Europe remains a problem. "After Iran in the case of Hezbollah, and the Gulf States and Iran in the case of Hamas," Levitt says, "the third largest market for financing these terrorist organizations is Western Europe and the United States. The United States is now engaged in a proactive effort to dry the well on its own soil. Unfortunately the Europeans are not doing enough."

Since January, American officials have filed dozens of formal diplomatic protests with the European Union and its member states seeking the inclusion of Hezbollah and the humanitarian wing of Hamas on the financial blacklist that is Europe's equivalent of President Bush's September 24 executive order barring individuals linked to terrorists from using the U.S. banking system.



Peter Steiner

While the Bush administration has given the European Union high marks for issuing warrants, conducting raids, and freezing assets of individuals and groups linked to al Qaeda, an Atlantic rift is emerging over whether the West's war on terrorism should extend to organizations that target Israelis.

One senior U.S. counterterrorism official working on the issue with the Europeans put it this way: "The credibility of the E.U. effort against financing terrorism is being questioned because they have not taken action against obvious terrorist organizations."

In March, top U.S. counterterrorism experts from the Treasury and State Departments traveled to Brussels for a briefing on recent investigations of Europeans affiliated with Hamas and Hezbollah. According to U.S. and E.U. officials, they reached no resolution on whether European

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banks should be instructed to freeze the assets of the same entities American banks have targeted since October. When Secretary of State Colin Powell travels to Madrid in April for the E.U.-U.S. summit, he is likely to press his counterparts on this question.

E.U. officials cite the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as the reason for their inaction. "It is a delicate stage of ongoing peace talks," says Wilfred Schneider, a spokesman for the European Commission's delegation in Washington. "There are discussions, there are investigations going on related to a number of foreign terrorist organizations." In addition, in order for the E.U. to freeze the assets of an individual linked to terrorism, all 15 members of the union must agree. And so far, the French in particular, according to E.U. and U.S. officials, have been reluctant to follow the American lead.

The spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry would not say whether his country objected to freezing the assets of organizations and individuals in Europe linked to Hamas and Hezbollah. Stressing the confidentiality of all internal E.U. discussions, Bernard Valéro told me, "We are discussing this with our European partners. We don't have a frozen position, we must listen to everyone." But Valéro added, "The fight against terrorism is a complex process which has to be studied closely, in close cooperation with all the members of the international community."

Since the end of the Cold War, the Europeans have opened trade relationships with a number of countries that the United States has written off for their links to terror.

And there's the rub. Since the end of the Cold War, the Europeans have opened trade relationships with a number of countries that the United States has written off for their links to terror. Thus, France, Germany, and Italy sell high-powered computers, pharmaceuticals, and oil drilling equipment to Iran, the leading financial, military, and spiritual sponsor of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Michael Ramirez

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While U.S. officials were playing hardball with North Korea last year trying to engage the Hermit Kingdom in serious negotiations about getting out of the ballistic missile business, the E.U. was sending delegates to Pyongyang to discuss warming diplomatic ties. And some of the loudest protests against potential American military action in Iraq are coming from Europe.

On the terror-financing front, more clashes are likely between Washington and Brussels. Despite the president's recent criticism of Israel's tactics in its own war against terror and his futile attempt to convince Ariel Sharon to allow Yasser Arafat to travel to Beirut for the Arab League summit, his administration is slowly tightening the noose around the chairman of the Palestinian Authority.

On March 27, the State Department officially placed the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade on its list of foreign terrorist organizations, making it illegal for Americans to provide material support to another group that has been sending suicide bombers into bar mitzvah celebrations and shopping malls since January.

But Al Aksa is, in fact, an offshoot of Tanzim, the militia affiliated with Yasser Arafat's political party, Fatah. Thus, for the first time (though the administration has yet to say this), the United States has designated a group with direct ties to the Palestinian Authority as a terrorist entity. And many members of Congress are looking to designate Arafat's personal bodyguards, Force 17, and the entire Fatah militia, as terrorists, too.

The E.U. is one of the leading financial sponsors of the Palestinian Authority, and so far it has refused to implicate Arafat or his organization directly in terrorist operations against Israelis. For that matter, the E.U. has been unwilling to freeze the assets even of self-proclaimed suicide bombers—which makes it hard to take Bernard Valéro's words at face value when he says, "We are in complete solidarity with the United States in the field of counterterrorism." ♦

A Little Modesty, Please

Bush's tax cut didn't cause the economic recovery.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

FEELING BUOYANT and mighty relieved by the stream of good news on the economy for the first quarter of this year, the Bush administration refuses to leave well enough alone. The White House has been issuing triumphant press releases about how the president is responsible for this apparent recovery. President Bush's Council of Economic Advisers has boasted that the Bush tax cut expanded economic output in the second half of 2001 by nearly a full percentage point and "helped put the economy back on the road to recovery in 2002."

More cheerleading came on March 13, when Harvard economist Martin Feldstein touted the Bush tax relief plan in a *Wall Street Journal* article entitled, "Tax Cuts, Rate Cuts Put the Economy Back on Track." Feldstein argued that the tax plan has already had "expansionary effects" by providing "a substantial lift to demand" and a "greater stimulus to spend."

Unfortunately, these statements are only slightly more persuasive than when Tom Daschle blamed the Bush tax cut for the recession. One inconvenient fact that made Daschle's anti-tax cut rant so preposterous—as several of us economic pundits quickly noted—was that there hasn't been a tax cut yet to speak of. Sure, there were the $300-$600 tax rebate checks sent out to workers late last summer. But this could only have helped if the Keynesian model of consumer demand as the driving force behind the economy were correct. And it isn't. If rebate checks can elevate growth rates, then we should get the government to send out $1,000 or even $2,000 rebate checks every August.

Moreover, even if one accepts the discredited Keynesian consumer-demand idea—as many in the White House evidently do—the evidence from this past fall indicates that most of the rebate dollars were not spent at all, they were stashed away in the bank and saved. So how could they have unleashed a recovery?

The White House seems befuddled about its own tax cut. The main economic value of tax cuts is to reward productive behavior—and by that I don't mean rushing off with the credit card to Wal-Mart (or Neiman Marcus, for that matter) and filling the shopping cart. Economic growth is not driven by big spending consumers but by individuals engaging in acts of enterprise: investment, risk-taking, work, and deferred gratification. High tax rates penalize these activities. But a tax rebate has almost zero impact on reducing barriers to growth or reducing capital costs.

Feldstein and the Bush economists are correct that the Bush tax cut will be a modest plus for the economy over the long term. But the operative word here is "long term." The only supply-side tax cut that has so far taken effect in the Bush plan is a 1 percentage point reduction in the top income tax rate from 39.6 percent to 38.6 percent. In fairness to Bush, this was about the best deal he could cut with the Democrats in Congress, who are as enthusiastic about tax cuts as my dog is about our electric fence. This reduction isn't inconsequential, but it certainly doesn't explain how

Stephen Moore is a senior fellow in economics at the Cato Institute.

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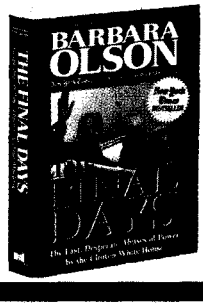

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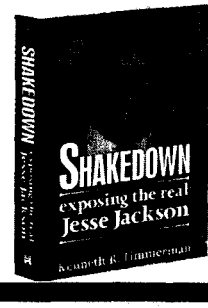

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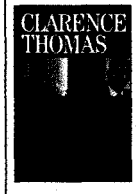

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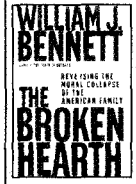

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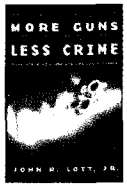

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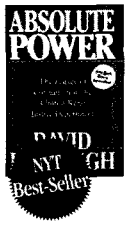

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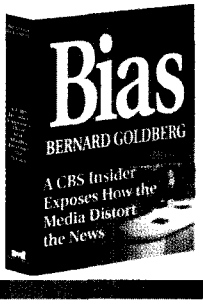

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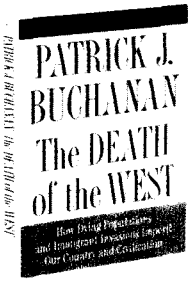

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the economy went from negative growth to perhaps as much as 4 percent growth so far this year. And I write this as someone who favored the Bush tax cut.

Another argument put forward for how the tax cuts are helping the economy is the notion that the promise of the future income tax rate cuts is positively impacting business and consumer behavior today. But phasing in tax rate reductions in the future delays economic activity, it doesn't accelerate it. Who in their right mind buys a car today, when they know that the big sale starts next week?

In sum, tax policy changes have had little to do with the nation's improved economic performance. We are experiencing the early stages of a mini-recovery that has been inspired almost entirely by monetary policy corrections. The Fed's belated interest rate cuts last year are finally beginning to revive business conditions. Whether the Fed rate cuts can on their own pull the economy back onto anything like the path of nearly 5 percent real GDP growth that we saw in the late 1990s is anyone's guess.

The problem with the administration's tax cut hyperbole is that overstating the impact of minor tax cuts could shatter Republicans' credibility—and undermine the intellectual case for supply-side tax rate reductions altogether. It's a little soon to be celebrating a return to the Roaring Nineties. The economy is hardly out of the woods, especially given the shakiness of the global economic situation. If this slight burst of prosperity stalls or turns into a double dip recession, the Bush team will have to eat its words, and the Daschle crowd will emcee the event: See, we told you so. Tax cuts don't work.

Every administration wants to toot its own horn when times are good. But there are more and less intelligent ways of doing so. Overselling the tax cut is yet another sign that this White House is incoherent in its economic thinking. Earlier this year the president bizarrely described his administration's philosophy as "part Keynesian, part supply side." That's a little like being part carnivore, part vegan. In any case, the Keynesian part seems to be dominant. Just one example: After September 11, a capital gains tax cut as part of an economic stimulus plan was well within the administration's reach. The White House economic team not only shunned the idea but made fatuous arguments that this might depress the stock market. It would have had precisely the opposite impact.

The White House does actually have a compelling story to tell about how the president's policies have helped restore economic growth. But it's not a story about the puny tax cut. No, it's his masterful handling of the war. Markets abhor risk, uncertainty, and threats to global commerce. Confidence in Bush's war leadership has reduced the investment risk premium associated with the grave new threat of terrorism. One of the underappreciated causes of the explosive economic recovery in the 1980s was Reagan's unwavering commitment to defeating the Evil Empire. Similarly, the investment climate has turned bullish—at least for now—largely because the investor class in America trusts Bush to contain and defeat the forces of terrorism around the globe.

That investment climate would turn a whole lot more bullish if the Bush tax rate cuts were made effective immediately (not in five years) and made permanent (they're now set to expire in 2011). Republicans should keep up the fight for this common sense stimulus policy. That won't happen until the White House stops congratulating itself for the wrong things. ♦

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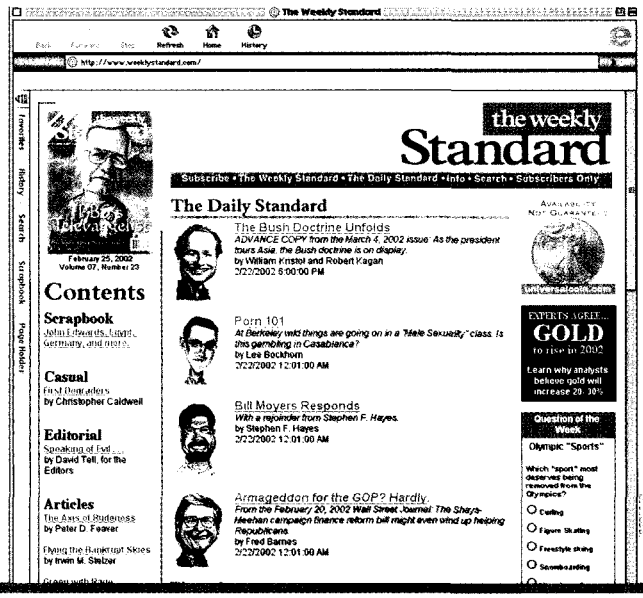

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Appeasing Arab Dictators

The road to peace in the Middle East runs through Baghdad, not the Arab League.

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

The Arab League, like so much else in the Muslim Middle East, has an identity problem. Created in 1944 through British inspiration, the League was supposed to cement a hodgepodge of newly created Arab states into a postwar bulwark of British influence and power. That didn't happen. The organization quickly became a cacophonous expression of the anti-Western, anti-Zionist "Arab nation," its meetings and declarations rhetorical exercises in wishful, often disingenuous thinking. Even Egyptian diplomats, who have long dominated the machinery of the Arab League, and who give the institution an urbanity not present in many of its constituent states, can privately apologize for the juvenility of its proceedings and the enormous gap between the League's version of the Arab world and the way the Middle East really works.

Which of course provokes the question: Why did the Bush administration hitch its prestige to the deliberations of this body? There was no chance whatsoever that the League would produce, as the *New York Times* surreally put it, an "extraordinary appeal" for peace to the Israeli people. The most fundamental political and cultural mechanics of the Arab Middle East dictated that Saudi crown prince Abdullah's "peace initiative," warmly welcomed and frenetically advanced by the administration, would dead-end in a proposal more retrograde than the one Yasser Arafat demanded at Camp David in July 2000. A quick *tour d'horizon* of the region should have told the administration that any League declaration would, at best, be just a Saudi pronouncement, that Syria—the only other front-line Arab state besides Saudi Arabia and Iraq without a peace treaty with Israel—would never go along with anything remotely feasible.

Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak expended enormous capital and time in 1999 and 2000 trying to seduce Syria's dictator Hafez al-Assad into signing a peace treaty. (Please recall the optimistic Western reporting, newspaper editorials, op-eds, and State Department assessment of the Israeli approach and Syrian receptivity.) Deploying Israeli concessions as his épée—the same maneuver he tried later with Arafat at Camp David—Barak got nowhere. Indeed, Barak's precipitous unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon—Iran's clerical overlord, Ali Khamenei, more accurately described it as a "flight"—clearly signaled Damascus, and Arafat, that Israel no longer had the stomach for guerrilla fighting.

The Assad regime in Syria has one overriding concern—to maintain control of Lebanon, where perhaps as many as one million Syrians now live, sucking the life out of a country that many, maybe most, Syrians consider a runaway Syrian province. A Syrian peace treaty with Israel, which perforce would entail a Lebanese accord, would require the Assad regime to crack down on the Lebanese Shiite organization Hezbollah, whose members consider themselves on the cutting edge of the Muslim world's holy war against the Jewish state. They are spiritually, financially, and militarily the children of Iran's clerical regime, and Hezbollah has become an important arms entrepôt for the Palestinian war against Israel. The recently seized *Karine A*, the Palestinian Authority's freighter carrying 50 tons of Iranian weaponry, rendezvoused with Tehran's men in the Persian Gulf via a Hezbollah middleman. A Syrian accord with Israel would fracture Damascus's critical economic and political ties to the clerical regime, which sees Hezbollah's war against Israel as its war, proof that Iran's Islamic revolution in foreign affairs is not dead. Most important, a Syrian treaty with Israel would inevitably set in motion greater Lebanese agitation for a Syrian withdrawal. The West, which has largely ignored Syria's occupation of Lebanon, might possibly

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start to focus on the Assad regime's depredations in the Levant. Hezbollah, which now lives to export its holy-warrior cause beyond Lebanon's borders, would definitely and violently focus on Syrian efforts betraying its anti-Zionist ideals. One suspects that the "Lebanese" decision to deny Arafat a satellite-delivered television presence at the Arab summit in Beirut was in part the Assad regime's way of reminding Yasser Arafat, and everybody else, who calls the shots. (The Lebanese no doubt also enjoyed insulting Arafat, who did so much in the 1970s to radicalize and destroy Lebanon's delicate society.)

And Syria's calculations aren't that different from Egypt's or Saudi Arabia's. Neither of America's Arab "allies" has much to gain—they actually have a good deal to lose—by making a real peace with Israel. In foreign affairs and domestically, Egypt's $2 billion-plus American aid package is premised on the assumption that Egypt is the Arab pillar of Middle East peace. If Egypt removes itself from the front line, then irrespective of the actions of other Arab states, war against Israel is unwinnable, if not unthinkable. Egypt is, as American diplomats are fond of saying, the great pro-American bulwark among Arab states, the intellectual and military anchor of "moderateness." Its peace treaty with Israel is thus sui generis.

However, with a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, one that banished war and evil thoughts against the Jewish state, Egypt's position—or to put it another way, President Hosni Mubarak's guaranteed cash flow—could be in serious jeopardy. The Mubarak regime's ability to politely blackmail the United States just wouldn't be the same, certainly not in the halls of Congress, if peace and tranquility broke out all over the region.

Domestically, a comprehensive peace for Egypt makes even less sense. Mubarak's war against homegrown Islamic fundamentalism—and the regime believes it decisively won its brutal campaign against Islamic militants in the 1990s—entailed an all-important compromise. The Egyptian president would allow increased Islamic sentiment throughout Egyptian society, particularly within the governing apparatus and schools, in exchange for internal peace and more explicit support for the regime from religious quarters. Also, Egypt's political class has been winking at its Arab-nationalist intellectuals, who find the idea of a permanent, normal peace with the Jewish state profoundly unsettling, if not morally repugnant. Cairo would thus have no more than a cold peace with Jerusalem. In its heart, Egypt would remain true to anti-Zionism.

Mubarak's strategy, which is the modus operandi for many Muslim regimes confronting fundamentalism, has been for America unquestionably a Faustian bargain—our biggest Arab "ally" has become the intellectual engine of anti-Americanism in the Arab world, a key factor in the rise of bin Ladenism. But for Mubarak it has worked. The Egyptian dictator, unlike Pakistan's ruler Pervez Musharraf, hasn't even made a pretense of reforming Egypt's dysfunctional educational system or the government-controlled press that spews forth some of the foulest stuff since Josef Goebbels.

A comprehensive Arab peace, enthusiastically and thoughtfully backed by Mubarak, would of course shred the social compact that has defined right and wrong in Egypt for twenty years. There is perhaps no surer way for Mubarak to spark domestic unrest in Egypt, certainly in the militant neighborhoods where Osama bin Laden was, and probably still is, viewed as a hero, than for the president to withdraw the government's seal of approval from anti-Zionism. If an individual's actions are a sign of cognizance, Mubarak certainly understands that Arab moderation in the cause of peace fuels the Islamic extremism that once seriously threatened the Egyptian regime. The Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the organization that gunned down Anwar Sadat and is now one with bin Laden's al Qaeda, savagely attacked the Egyptian state because it had made unforgivable compromises with Israel and the West. Mubarak waged a truly draconian campaign against them. He is unlikely to be so deluded by his success as to tempt fate again and reignite kamikaze holy warriors in his midst.

A comprehensive peace, enthusiastically backed by Mubarak, would shred the social compact that has defined right and wrong in Egypt for twenty years.

In other words, for the Egyptians, the Saudi peace initiative is nearly the opposite of what the Bush administration so desperately envisioned: Because it is not moderate, it is actually a means for Mubarak to demonstrate his anti-Israeli credentials to his citizenry and the larger Arab world. Mubarak, who appears to have no particular fondness for Arafat, stood by the chairman in July 2000 when the Palestinians scuttled the Camp David talks. He stood by the chairman in September 2000 when Arafat decided again to augment his negotiation tactics with terrorism. He actually leapfrogged Arafat by canceling his appearance at last week's Arab summit in Beirut. In so doing, he also preempted and trumped the annoying Saudis, who are once again trying hard to be the preeminent Arab players in the Middle East. In Beirut, the Saudis actually laid down their new yardstick for justifying Arab intransigence

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against Israel (again, the opposite of what the Bush administration was hoping they were going to do; the opposite of what the elite American press reported from the summit). Mubarak, by not showing up, tried to make himself appear above the League's always distressing theatrics. He wanted to be one with the Palestinian people in their resistance to Israeli oppression. He wanted to be for both "peace" and war. Given his desire for U.S. money and domestic tranquility, he took an eminently reasonable approach.

For the Saudis and Egyptians, Beirut must be considered a success. No one in Washington is now talking about September 11. No one is talking about the instrumental Saudi and Egyptian roles in poisoning the minds of two generations in the Arab world. No one is talking about the key aid Saudi Arabia has given to Palestinian fundamentalist groups, preeminently Hamas, which sent the kamikaze holy warrior into the Israeli seaside hotel in Netanya during Passover. No one in the administration—the president excepted, of course—has stood up to issue a scathing philosophical denunciation of this death-wish phenomenon, to state in irreversible words that anyone who labels a suicide bomber a "martyr" in a "war of resistance" is beyond the pale of civilization. With the exception of the president, the Bush administration seems to want to hold itself captive to the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation—by default or by choice, to define that conflict in terms inoffensive to the Saudis and the Egyptians and, beyond them, the "Arab street," supposedly represented by the Arab League. The Bush administration's panic to have Arab and Muslim cover for future action against Iraq has left it rhetorically defenseless.

The administration is now in an unpleasant spot. Saudi Arabia and Egypt—its two heavyweight Arab "allies"—have no intention whatsoever of forcing Yasser Arafat, or any of his minions who may succeed him, to accept a settlement along the lines that Arafat rejected at Camp David. A clear-cut, maximalist position has been laid out in Beirut, a stand that allows the Arab nations to claim the cause of peace yet endorse suicide bombers. The entire Arab world saw how Vice President Cheney's journey through the Middle East predictably became a public roadshow for belittling America's support of Israel and the president's decision to do something about Saddam Hussein. The Bush administration's decision to veto a meeting between Arafat and Cheney because the chairman had failed to demonstrate his commitment to curtail Palestinian terrorism, and simultaneously to encourage the Israelis to allow Arafat to go to Beirut to advance the cause of "peace," reveals extraordinary confusion, both strategic and moral, within the State Department and the National Security Council. The Arabs are not blind. Washington was asking to be publicly kicked, and the Arab League, particularly the Saudis, obliged. The Saudi delegation went out of its way to make nice-nice to the Iraqis present, adding in its own eyes a little extra public humiliation for the United States.

Saudi Arabia, like Egypt, is a society tied in knots, both fearful and proud of its Arab and Muslim credentials. It is congenitally incapable of being a bold country, domestically or internationally, a prerequisite for being on the cutting edge of the Arab world and seeking peace with Israel.

No matter. Unless the Bush administration continues to indulge its pretentious side, the Saudi royal family really doesn't believe that it can long contradict or sidetrack the United States. If Washington pushes against Iraq or against Arafat, the Saudis, like the Egyptians, will give ground. The Bush administration should calm down. Even if it persists in the belief that it needs political cover for its actions in the Middle East, it ought to understand that our Muslim friends will be more numerous and steadfast the more forceful and determined we appear. One of the great blessings that America enjoys, and Israel does not, is that we can mess things up repeatedly and still win. The superpower advantage will become crystal clear the moment the Bush administration decides to change the debate in the Middle East, from Israel and the Palestinians to the far more important issue of Baathi Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction.

However, the administration must first understand that it can change the debate overnight, that it is in no way held hostage by "the Arab street" or the convictions of an Arabian prince and an Egyptian dictator. With one hand tied behind its back, America can turn the tables on the Arab League and Yasser Arafat, who has repeatedly tried to get Washington to obtain for him what terrorism so far has not. When American soldiers are in Baghdad, and the Al Jazeera satellite television channel is reluctantly broadcasting footage of jubilation in the streets throughout Iraq, the embarrassing episode of Prince Abdullah's "peace initiative" at the Beirut summit will prove to have been but a brief entry in the State Department's annals.

In the meantime, the Bush administration should tell the Israelis that they ought to do whatever it takes to defend themselves from suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein, if not the Near East Bureau of the State Department, will then understand that America intends to be unrelenting in its war on those who convert nail bombs, jet airliners, or toxin-laden warheads into expressions of love of God or country. If we persevere, we will also do far more for the Palestinians than Yasser Arafat and the Arab League have ever done. ♦

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The U.N.'s Jewish Problem

Anti-Semitism has found a comfortable home on the East River.

By Ruth R. Wisse

Jeane Kirkpatrick once remarked that while she was a professor of political science there were two mysteries she could not understand: how the Holocaust could have happened, and how the rest of the world could have let it happen. Things became clear once she took her post as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 1981. The anti-Semitism of many member nations, and the reluctance of others to compromise their "neutrality" while pursuing their own political ends, were almost as much on view during her tenure at the United Nations as they had been in Europe four decades earlier.

On March 18, U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan released a letter to the media telling Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that Israel must end what he called the "illegal occupation" of Palestinian lands. This statement was false. As George P. Fletcher noted in the *New York Times*, and other legal experts have long affirmed, "it is not illegal for victorious powers to occupy hostile territory seized in the course of war until they are able to negotiate a successful peace treaty with their former enemies." In recognition of this precept, following the war of June 1967 the Security Council passed Resolution 242 calling for Israeli withdrawal from "territories" rather than from "the territories," precisely avoiding the implication that the occupation itself was illegal. Annan not only obscured this crucial distinction, but then downplayed the significance of his terminology—on the perverse grounds that such incrimination of Israel had subsequently become common coin within his organization.

What Annan should have been seeking to end is the pernicious role of the U.N. as instigator and abettor of a possible international conflagration. The U.N.'s assault on Israel, in direct violation of its Charter, now rivals even the Jew-hating indoctrination that preceded World War II. The very organization that is charged with ensuring the equal protection of all nations, large and small, has become the spearhead of attempts to destroy one of its most vulnerable members.

The U.N.'s first debate over Palestine set the pattern for everything that followed. On November 29, 1947, a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly adopted the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine to divide the already divided area (of which Jordan had the lion's share) into a Jewish and an Arab state. The Jews accepted partition; the Arabs opposed it by force. Although the resolution gave Jews only a sliver of what the 1917 Balfour Declaration had promised them and a fraction of their historic homeland, they established Israel on the land they were accorded. The U.N. did not intervene when five Arab countries then attacked the new state, vowing to push its inhabitants into the sea. For the next 53 years Arab states fought Israel and never had to abide by the outcome of their military defeats. And they discovered early on that the U.N. would defer to their vast demographic and political advantage rather than come to Israel's defense.

It is worth asking why the Arabs did not accept the partition of Palestine and encourage the Palestinian Arabs to develop their independence. Arab states claim that they are opposed to Israel because the Jews deprived the Arabs of their land, but in refusing to partition Palestine, it is they who insisted on keeping the Palestinians homeless. Had Arab governments settled their Palestinian brethren as Israel did the Jewish refugees from Arab lands, they would have lacked evidence of Jewish malfeasance on which to base their politics of grievance. Maintaining Palestinian Arabs in refugee camps was a calculated strategy for organizing Arab politics in perpetual opposition to the Jews. The United Nations was charged with support-

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ing a population that their fellow Arabs were determined to retain as refugees. They preserved and administered the squalid refugee camps. And those camps—the consequence of Arab policy—have been used to demonstrate the iniquity of Israel.

Let us acknowledge that the United Nations cannot successfully broker all the international conflicts that fall under its aegis, but in no other case except that of Israel did the organization become a weapon of belligerents against one of its members. When the United Nations took over the refugee camps instead of making Arab governments resettle their fellow Arabs, it absolved the Arabs of responsibility for their aggression, and perpetuated the apparent "evidence" that Israel had displaced the Palestinians. Similarly, following each new defeat on the field of battle, the Arabs resorted to the United Nations to end the conflict in a way that would preclude the need to concede Israel's legitimacy, and that would charge Israel retroactively with responsibility for their war against it.

The Arab assaults had left Israel holding land beyond its original borders. Those territories that Israel gained in self-defense were now exhibited as evidence of Jewish expansionism. Once again, as in the case of the refugee camps, the Arabs misrepresented the consequence of their aggression as the cause of their aggression. The Palestine Liberation Organization, founded in 1964, before Israel came into possession of the disputed territories of the West Bank and Gaza, was increasingly funded by Arab governments as the response to Israel's capture of the territories.

Obsession with Israel at the U.N. is by now as commonplace as the wolfish nature of the wolf in an Aesop fable.

Shortly after the Yom Kippur War of 1973, having failed to dislodge Israel in their third coordinated assault, the Arabs joined the Communist bloc in opening a new U.N. propaganda front. Arab governments recycled Soviet slogans of the 1930s and used their influence to pass a resolution defining Zionism as racism. Zionism is the belief that the Jews should have a country. Israel is that country—as sanctioned by the United Nations. Using the technique of the Big Lie, the Arabs who refused to recognize the Jewish state accused the Jews of committing a racial offense for the sin of wanting their own land.

The United Nations championed this new brand of anti-Semitism for the next fifteen years. Once again, as in the 1930s, an anti-democratic axis had formed in opposition to the Jewish people, only this time its pulpit was the U.N. itself. With the passage of the Zionism-is-racism resolution, Arab leaders demonstrated that it was possible to enlist the U.N. in the prosecution of a fellow member.

When the Zionism-is-racism resolution was repudiated in 1991, thanks to the initiative of the United States, no apology was made to the Jewish people for a campaign of defamation. Nor did the secretariat and U.N. bureaucracy make any attempt to stanch the poison that had seeped into the international arena. Instead, Arab governments were allowed to use the perception they had fostered of Israel's illegitimacy to hijack an ever-increasing proportion of U.N. time and resources—almost 30 percent of Security Council meetings—for a country that contains about one thousandth of the world's population. Indeed, the anti-Jewish campaign of the United Nations reached extraordinary heights at the United Nations Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance that convened in Durban, South Africa, just prior to September 11, 2001. In the words of one observer, "A coalition led by regimes that persecute their own people—and in some cases harbor international terrorists—sought by formal declaration to delegitimize the Jewish state, demonize its people, and mobilize a global movement against its existence as a country." Even longtime students of anti-Semitism were shocked by the level of anti-Jewish invective at the conference, which was obviously intended to deflect criticism from many of the regimes mounting the attacks.

Obsession with Israel at the U.N. is by now as commonplace as the wolfish nature of the wolf in an Aesop fable. Reporting last month on the 46th session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, where the United States tried to promote a resolution on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, Kate O'Beirne writes wearily, "In the end there was only one roll-call. It was on that hardy U.N. perennial, the condemnation of Israel." In another recent session, the Commission on Human Rights passed one resolution on the Congo (population: 43 million), none on Burundi (6 million), Somalia (7 million), Angola (10 million), or Algeria (31 million), but five resolutions on the "Occupied Arab Territories" (population: 3.5 million). Canadian legal scholar Anne Bayefsky, who specializes in refugee studies, says this record of the United Nations "ought to be an embarrassment to every democratic U.N. member. The tragedy, and the peril, is that it is not."

In allowing the Arab countries to internationalize their war against the Jewish State, the United Nations has endangered Jews in new ways. Whereas earlier anti-

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AP / Wide World Photos / Adel Hana

A march in front of U.N. headquarters in Gaza City, Sept. 5, 2001.

Had the United Nations been fulfilling its true mandate, Israel ought to have sparkled among over 100 even younger nations as the showpiece of democracy. No other country has ever achieved so much while defending itself against so relentless an assault. Not even the United States has successfully integrated so many refugees in ratio to its resident population. By allowing Arab countries to conscript the U.N. for their war against the Jewish state, the democracies advertised the weakness of their system. Every advantage that Arabs have gained over Israel at the U.N. proclaims the strength of autocracies and dictatorships over liberal democracy. This lesson is reinforced every time there is a condemnation of the Jewish state.

Semitism could be identified with its evil sponsors and morally, if not militarily, countered, the United Nations lends its presumed legitimacy and prestige to anti-Semitism. The Jew-hatred of certain Arabs and Muslims is one thing; Muslim clerics have even distorted the Koran's injunction against suicide to encourage more killings of Jews in Israel and elsewhere. But on university campuses students now cite the U.N. as the source of their antipathy to the Jewish state. They accept "that hardy perennial, the condemnation of Israel," as a moral beacon rather than the sign of corruption that it is.

The tragedy and the peril do not end there. Experience ought to have taught the international community that anti-Semitism is an instrument of anti-democratic politics. When a U.N. delegate from Algeria, one of the most notorious abusers of human rights, recently used Nazi terminology to describe Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, he was mocking all those who know what Nazism is and who went to war in order to defeat it. When delegates to a conference on humanitarian aid spent twelve hours bashing Israel as opposed to two hours on the AIDS epidemic in Africa, they advertised their contempt for governments that try to cure disease by scientific means. A society's deflection of energy to anti-Semitism is a sign of its political demoralization; the more it whips up frenzy against the Jews, the more it requires going to war to release that frenzy. The rise of anti-Semitism at the U.N. correlates with the rise of the politics of resentment against what Jews represent—an open and democratic society, the ethic of competition and individual freedom.

The U.S. government is hardly unaware of the enormity of this issue. Testifying before the House International Relations Committee in the summer of 1999, a representative of the State Department pointed out that Israel alone has been denied membership in a regional group, which precludes its membership on the Security Council and participation in the full range of international activities conducted at the U.N. He cited the pattern of abusive resolutions "incompatible with the basic principles guiding the search for peace" that the United States opposes year after year.

When American politicians, businessmen, or physicians betray their office or profession, they are subject to investigation so their wrongdoings can be checked and the system safeguarded. The United Nations has no such oversight. It has behaved like the physician who kills his feeblest patient, the businessman who cheats his smallest shareholder, and the politician who betrays his weakest constituency. Although we have passed the eleventh hour, the president of the United States ought to form an independent commission of inquiry to determine how the United Nations betrayed its mandate, whether anything can yet be done to rectify some of the damage, and whether the organization as we know it still deserves to exist. ♦

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Join the Vast Right-Wing CATHOLIC Conspiracy

Hillary Clinton said there was a Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy out to get her (sort of) hubby. The Conspiracy didn't topple Billy boy, but it did gore Al — the cool dude who no doubt invented unisex restrooms — and prevent him from ascending to the presidency. Never underestimate the power of a conspiracy, or even a single conspirator! (Every vote counts, as you *now* know.)

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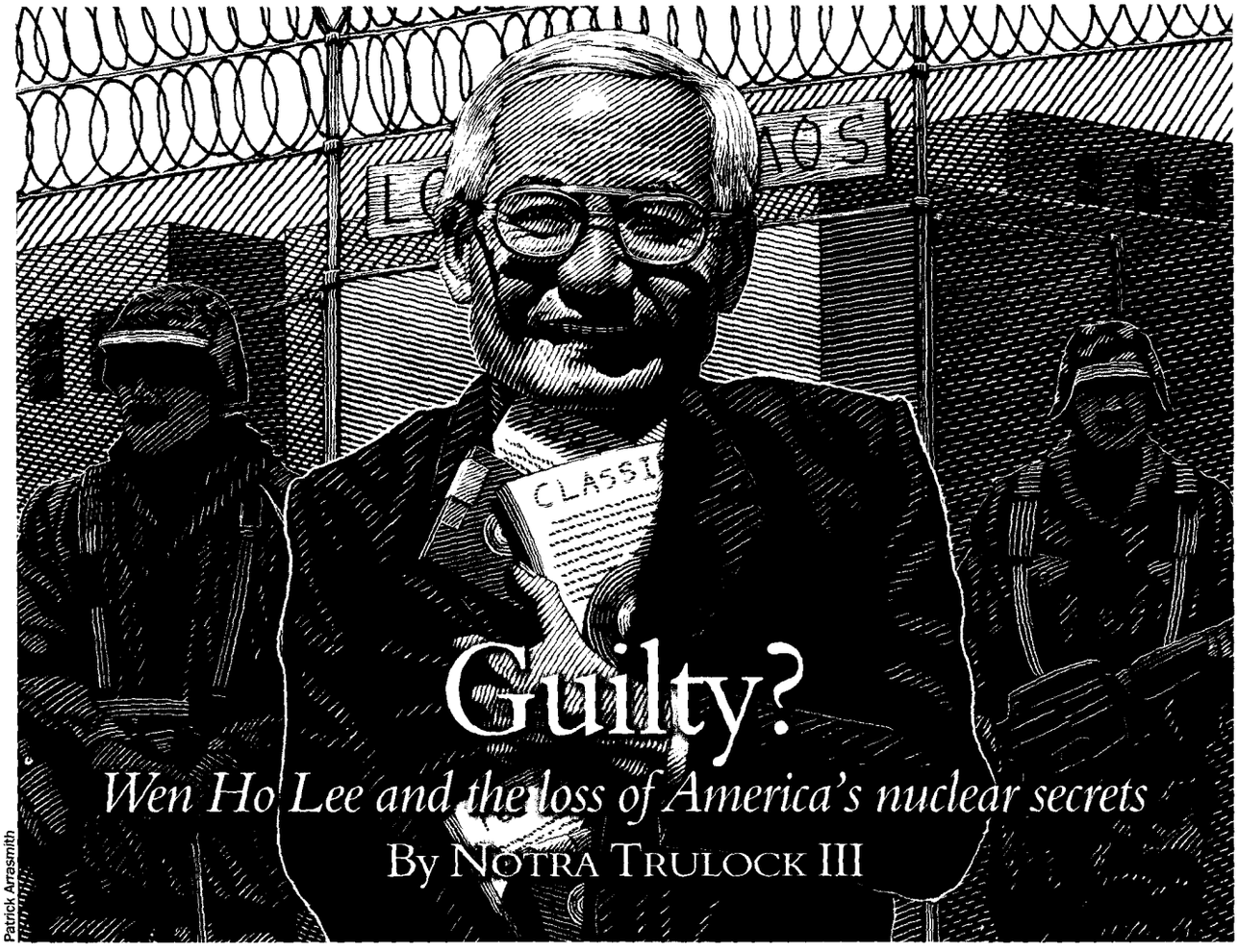

Patrick Arrasmith

Guilty?

Wen Ho Lee and the loss of America's nuclear secrets

By Notra Trulock III

Was Wen Ho Lee a spy who passed American nuclear secrets to the People's Republic of China or a victim of a racial witch-hunt by the American government?

Lee walked out of a federal courtroom on September 13, 2000, a free man and even a hero for seeming to stand up to a heavy-handed government prosecution. President Clinton questioned the fairness of his own Justice Department's strategy of holding Lee in solitary confinement (a strategy devised in the White House situation room in December 1999 in the presence of Clinton national security adviser Sandy Berger). The case created a backlash in the media against the FBI, the Justice Department, and the Department of Energy (which oversees the labs in which Lee worked). Lee was widely portrayed as part fall guy, an innocent man on whom decades of mismanagement at the nation's laboratories could be blamed, and part victim, a scapegoat on whose head descended the political hysteria about China that swept through Washington in 1999.

The former director of intelligence at the Department of Energy, Notra Trulock III was a senior official involved in the investigation of the loss of nuclear secrets. His book on spying at American labs, Code Name KINDRED SPIRIT: Inside the Chinese Nuclear Espionage Scandal, *is forthcoming from Encounter Books.*

My Country Versus Me
The First-Hand Account by the Los Alamos Scientist Who Was Falsely Accused of Being A Spy
by Wen Ho Lee, with Helen Zia
Hyperion, 332 pp., $23.95

A Convenient Spy
Wen Ho Lee and the Politics of Nuclear Espionage
by Dan Stober and Ian Hoffman
Simon & Schuster, 384 pp., $26

Fall guy and victim: That's certainly how Wen Ho Lee sees himself. His book about his troubles, *My Country Versus Me*—with a cover showing a sad-faced Lee standing before the Stars and Stripes, a spare desert landscape in the distance—rarely misses an opportunity to argue that none of this would have happened to him had he not been Chinese. Lee did nothing wrong, or at least nothing that many other non-Chinese scientists at Los Alamos hadn't done before and probably since.

The other new book on the Wen Ho Lee scandal, *A Convenient Spy*, goes further still. Ian Hoffman, who reports on Los Alamos affairs for the *Albuquerque Journal*, and Dan Stober, who covers Livermore National Lab for the *San Jose Mercury News*, insist that Lee was wronged by his government. But in their telling, the real victim is the Los Alamos National Laboratory and America's nuclear-weapons complex—a world of happy, hard-working scientists wrecked by suspicion, ham-fisted investigation, and political expediency.

Explaining his actions as merely the typical ones of a scientist interacting with international colleagues, both books reject the notion that Wen Ho Lee actually aided the Chinese. They accept Lee's claim, for example, that his

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assistance to his Chinese counterparts was minimal, all of it based on unclassified data, and, in any event, had been approved by Los Alamos. They dismiss his assistance to China's nuclear-code writers as "harmless," with many benign applications besides the development of nuclear weapons.

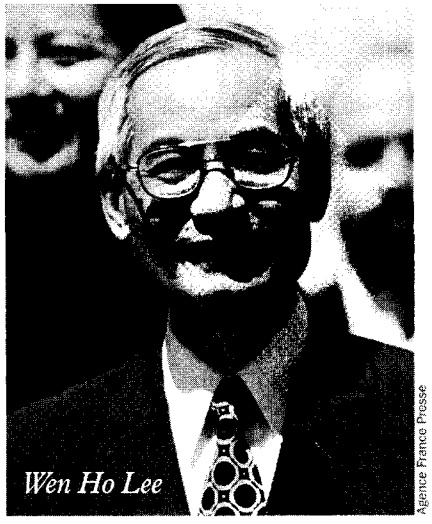
In fact, there were good reasons the government focused on Lee, and why in 1996 Lee became the FBI's main suspect in the loss of secrets to China about the W88 thermonuclear warhead, the smallest and most advanced in the United States' nuclear arsenal. The real story of Wen Ho Lee is far murkier and more disturbing than that portrayed in *My Country Versus Me* or *A Convenient Spy*—to say nothing of the media's endless morality plays.

In 1996, Wen Ho Lee had already been the subject of two previous FBI investigations. The first was back in the early 1980s and involved his contact with another espionage suspect at Livermore National Laboratory, together with a history of unauthorized interactions with Taiwanese scientists and intelligence officers. The FBI eventually closed that investigation, probably after Wen Ho Lee and his wife offered to work for the FBI collecting information on the Chinese scientists they would meet in the expanding Los Alamos-Chinese laboratory exchanges.

The second was opened in 1994 after Hu Side, the chief of China's nuclear-weapons program, was spotted greeting Lee like a long-lost brother at a Los Alamos meeting. Hu was overheard to say that Lee had helped China with computer codes and software. A check of Lee's travel reports showed that Lee had failed to include Hu among his reported travel contacts.

It took the FBI some time to become serious about this second investigation, but eventually it learned that Lee had not only failed to mention his meetings with Hu but had lied repeatedly about his contacts with China's nuclear scientists—telling his superiors nothing about what information the Chinese had sought from him and what assistance he had provided. Even Los Alamos counterintelligence official Robert Vrooman would skeptically record in his 1988 journal that Wen Ho Lee was apparently the only Los Alamos scientist to have visited China *twice* and *not* been asked for classified information.

Meanwhile, press reports about Chinese nuclear-espionage efforts, coupled with the Clinton administration's questionable solicitation of funds for the 1996 election, had resulted in the creation of a congressional investigative committee under Representative Christopher Cox. By 1998, the impending report of the Cox Committee on the Clinton administration's failure to cope with Chinese espionage motivated the


Wen Ho Lee

Agence France Presse

FBI to finish the Lee investigation as quickly as possible. Lee failed a polygraph administered in February 1999, specifically on questions related to the W88 warhead and the provision of weapons codes to unauthorized persons. But the process was botched, and, with Lee steadfastly denying wrongdoing, FBI agent Dave Kitchen pronounced Lee "not guilty" of nuclear espionage.

Then the FBI made an astonishing discovery. It seems that for more than a decade, Wen Ho Lee had been building a personal library of nuclear-weapons codes, classified details of nuclear-warhead designs, and files containing all the classified data from the more than a thousand nuclear tests conducted by the United States over the past four decades. He had stored this library on a notoriously vulnerable unclassified computer network at Los Alamos National Laboratory and also on several portable computer tapes. After dragging its feet for three years, the FBI uncovered evidence of unreported contacts with very senior nuclear officials from the People's Republic of China. When it finally got around to interviewing him, Lee told the Bureau that he been assisting the Chinese in improving their nuclear-weapons codes.

Despite mounting evidence pointing to espionage, federal prosecutors decided to focus instead on Lee's illegal computer activities. They indicted him on fifty-nine counts of mishandling classified information and persuaded a federal judge to impose "special administrative measures" on him, including solitary confinement in the Santa Fe County Detention Facility. After a defense strategy aided as much by a bungling prosecution team as its own legal maneuverings, Wen Ho Lee accepted a plea bargain. Trading information on the whereabouts of his computer tapes in exchange for his freedom, he pled guilty to one count of mishandling classified information and was sentenced to time served—227 days of solitary confinement—and a small fine.

A key ingredient in Lee's defense strategy was the allegation that he was selectively prosecuted because he was Chinese. The defense stressed that many other non-Chinese lab scientists and even a former CIA director had done almost the same thing and weren't spending their days in solitary confinement. Robert Vrooman came forward with charges that Lee had been selected back in 1996 as a W88 espionage suspect solely on the basis of his ethnicity. Ethnic profiling was much in the news then, and Vrooman's allegations got widespread coverage. In *My Country Versus Me*, Wen Ho Lee claims, "Had I not been Chinese, I never would have been accused of espionage and threatened with execution."

But in depositions given in a lawsuit just weeks before his book's publication, Lee contradicted the claims about racial profiling he makes in *My Country Versus Me*. Under oath he said that he doesn't think that he was indicted because he was Chinese, that he never

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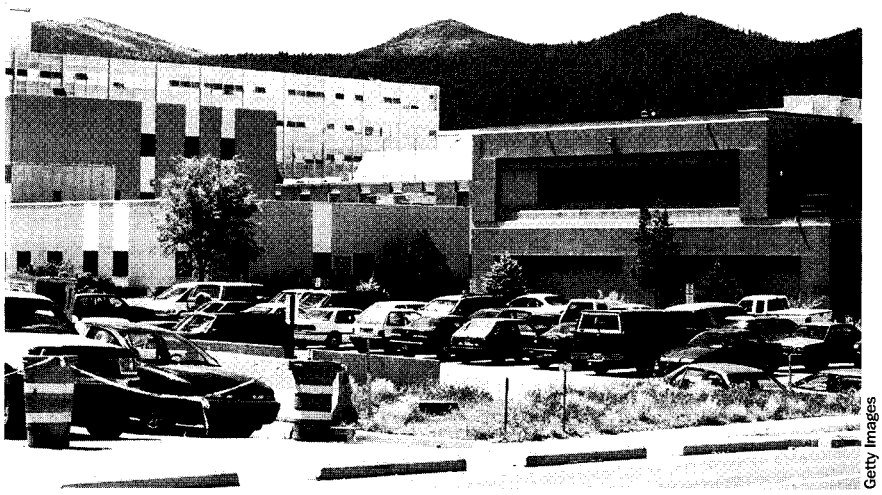
told his lawyers to allege that he was investigated because he was Chinese, that he didn't agree with Vrooman's allegations, that he had never experienced racism, and that he didn't even understand the term "racial profiling." He also admitted the government had valid reasons for investigating him.

Nearly every other participant in the case testified that racism or racial profiling played no role in Lee's selection as a FBI espionage suspect. A Justice Department report released in 2002 concluded that racism was never a factor in this case: Wen Ho Lee was investigated because of his failure to comply with his security obligations and substantial indications that he had been helping the Chinese nuclear-weapons program since the mid-1980s.

Stripped of the cover of racism, the defense of Wen Ho Lee loses most of its steam—and the nagging questions about his activities return. What transpired during Lee's meetings with Chinese nuclear scientists? Why was he so secretive about them?

Stober and Hoffman report the 1988 meeting with Hu and even claim that Hu asked Lee some very pointed questions about the W88 warhead. They fail to note, however, that had Lee reported this 1988 meeting with Hu Side to the FBI (which was sponsoring his trip and picking up his expenses), the United States would have learned of a security breach involving the W88 years before the American intelligence community finally determined that the Chinese had acquired secret details about the warhead. Lee says he did meet Hu Side in 1988, but was afraid to tell the FBI for fear that he would get in trouble, and that he has no memory of the 1994 meeting with Hu Side.

And what of the tapes themselves, including one made in 1997 containing the latest design details of the W88 warhead? Lee says that he destroyed the tapes by tossing them in a dumpster inside the security perimeter near Los Alamos's Main Administration Building. Months later, the FBI was seen digging in the huge landfill outside of Los Alamos; the Bureau found some tapes, but these weren't from Lee's collection.



Getty Images

The Los Alamos Laboratory

Lee says that he doesn't regret making the tapes and his only mistake was using an unclassified computer to do it. In fact, he says that he was doing the country a service "by keeping his codes safe and secure in a version that could be restored, . . . I believed that I was doing something good for America."

In fact, he claims, the only reason he made the tapes in the first place is that he was afraid that he would lose all his hard work when the Los Alamos computer system "crashed." He had lost important files in the past and didn't want to go through that again. But his claim is contradicted by lab computer officials, who testified that the lab's computer network was stable by 1993, when Lee started his tape collection, and that Los Alamos routinely backed up and stored copies of each weapons code and data file, so Lee and other scientists wouldn't lose their work in the event of a system crash. Lee declined to seek help from the lab's computer experts to preserve his own data and broke any number of security regulations in making his own tapes. More to the point, why did Lee collect *other* scientists' data? His systematic gathering of files containing classified information from his unsuspecting colleagues remains unexplained.

The vulnerability of the network, on which Lee stored these files for more than a decade, led many to fear that all our classified nuclear-warhead secrets were compromised. Los Alamos's monitoring systems could detect intruders logging on to the network, but were unable to tell which files were accessed during the intrusion. A government report in 1998 listed 324 outside attacks on lab networks in just a few months during 1997 and 1998.

In the end, neither book provides a satisfactory answer to the question of Chinese nuclear espionage and the extent of Wen Ho Lee's participation. Of the fact of espionage there is no doubt: The American intelligence community twice in 1999 publicly declared that the Chinese had acquired nuclear-warhead secrets by espionage. Another 1999 government report concluded that security at the Energy Department nuclear laboratories was so bad that "sensitive nuclear weapons information was certainly lost to espionage." How it happened remains a mystery. But if the investigation began again today, Wen Ho Lee would still be a prime suspect.

Unfortunately, the FBI's bungled investigation of the Lee case has left the United States no closer to discovering the sources of that espionage today than it was in 1996. Among the many unanswered questions about the case, none is as striking as those surrounding the FBI's handling of the case in late 1998 and early 1999. Why did the FBI allow a private security firm to polygraph Lee, even though Lee had been under FBI investigation for nearly four years? Why did the FBI neglect to establish surveillance on Lee after the polygraph, thereby missing his destruction of incriminating evidence? How did Lee get back into a highly secure lab facility and gather up tapes and other incriminating materials at 2:45 A.M.—*after* his clearance had been revoked and his access to this facility suspended?

And where are the computer tapes? It was known by 1996 that China was

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after exactly the type of nuclear-weapons codes and testing data contained in Wen Ho Lee's tape collection. The Justice Department and the FBI have only Wen Ho Lee's word that the tapes were destroyed and not acquired by the Chinese. An offer made this year of limited immunity to Lee's wife in return for her help finding the computer tapes indicates that the Justice Department and the FBI aren't satisfied that Lee's account of the final disposition of the tapes is the last word.

There is this much truth to Wen Ho Lee's claim: The woeful record of security problems at America's nuclear labs goes back to at least the late 1970s, and the Department of Energy has a long record of mismanagement and neglect of security. The combination of these two made the Chinese espionage successes possible. By 1995, Energy Department policies that encouraged "openness," a flood of sensitive-country visitors into the labs, and severe budget cuts had brought security at the labs to a crisis point. The combination of "lab culture," organizational disarray, managerial neglect, and sheer arrogance created, in the words of one 1999 government report, "an espionage scandal waiting to happen."

The FBI's inept handling of the case opened the way for Lee's defense team to transform the issue from espionage to racism. But perhaps more distressing is the fact that little has changed at Los Alamos and America's other nuclear-research institutions. After a brief interlude, lab doors are open once again to sensitive-country visitors, including those from countries on the terrorist watch list. Security problems continue to fester. Not long ago, Los Alamos "misplaced" yet more sensitive nuclear-weapons design information, but then quickly claimed it had "found" the lost data. Lab computer networks remain vulnerable to insider threats. Stonewalling and denial—of both past events and continuing risks—best sums up the attitude of the Energy Department and the labs it is supposed to be running. Even after the Wen Ho Lee scandal, another espionage case at the nation's nuclear laboratories seems waiting to happen. ♦

Dick Powell and Joan Blondell in the 1940 film *I Want A Divorce*. Hulton / Archive.

Wedding Bell Blues

James Q. Wilson on the unmarrying of America.

BY CLAUDIA WINKLER

In *The Marriage Problem: How Our Culture Has Weakened Families*, the eminent social scientist James Q. Wilson sets out to offer an explanation deeper than "the Sixties" for the destabilization of marriage in recent years. The resulting short book is a fine multidisciplinary survey of the history of marriage and the forces conspiring to weaken it.

The Marriage Problem
How Our Culture Has Weakened Families
by James Q. Wilson
HarperCollins, 274 pp., $25.95

Marriage is not in trouble everywhere: In much of the world—Wilson points to parts of Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, and some parts of Europe—"marriage remains the goal of every couple desiring children." But in the English-speaking world and much of Europe, childbearing out of wedlock has risen, on average, more than sixfold since 1960. In the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, Denmark, and Sweden, a quarter or more of births are to unmarried women; in many Caribbean nations, illegitimacy rates are higher still.

In this country, divorce has been rising since the nineteenth century, but it long was regarded as a tragedy or a disgrace. Today, roughly half of marriages end in divorce, and the old stigma is gone—this despite the fact that the costs for children have become so plain that now, Wilson says, even some sociologists concede them. A wide array of psychological and social ills, from poor performance in school to unwed parenthood, beset children in one-parent families at much higher rates than children living with both parents, and the differences are not explained away by income status.

Although he doesn't develop the international comparisons, Wilson does propose one principal explanation for the distinctiveness of the Anglo-American world, and one aggravating factor at work in the United States and the Caribbean. The first is the influence of the Enlightenment; the second the legacy of slavery.

The Enlightenment, with its confidence in human reason, devalued religion and tradition. In the Anglo-American countries, the ideas of Locke, Hume, and Adam Smith took root in favorable cultural soil, prepared by the citizens' belief in "the rights of English-

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men" and long experience with limited government. Although Enlightenment thinkers took the traditional family for granted, they accelerated an evolution of ideas that over the ensuing two centuries would gradually emancipate women and change marriage from a sacred covenant to an enforceable contract to an optional arrangement hinging only on the two partners' will.

All through the nineteenth century, Wilson shows, science on the one hand, and artists and intellectuals on the other, were helping redefine "the moral impulse from religion to habit," and thus unmooring "habit from any external support save preference and freedom." For a long time, the edifice of tradition stood. Outside avant-garde circles, "the assumption that families were valuable governed almost everyone" well into the twentieth century. But all the while, society was living on the moral capital of its religious past. The shock of World War I left Victorian pieties in ruins.

The Roaring Twenties, Wilson argues, were a "test run" for the Sixties. Only the Great Depression, which forced families to regroup for economic reasons, and the exigencies of World War II postponed the day when the new freedom would be embraced and pushed to its limit. As the first generation born after the war came of age, the dam broke. The changes in the family in the fifteen years beginning in 1965 were "unique in family history," Wilson writes. "They were sharp, immediate, and affected virtually every industrialized nation all at once," although, as we have seen, to varying degrees.

Within American society, the erosion of the family has hit African Americans hardest. In 1960, 20 percent of black children under eighteen already lived in single-mother households; in 1996, more than half did. The famous "Moynihan Report" of 1965, warning of trouble in the black family that was bad and getting worse, cited what was then the prevailing view that slavery had weakened or destroyed families. This was the view enshrined in classics by black writers like W.E.B. Du Bois and E. Franklin Frazier. Moynihan triggered a firestorm, and a politically correct revisionist scholarship was born, which insisted that the black family had come through slavery rather well and that only modern racism and unemployment had seriously damaged it.

Defending the older view, Wilson points to the holes in leading revisionist works. Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, he says, supply no evidence for their optimistic view of family life under slavery, and Herbert Gutman discusses genealogies, not family structure. More recent research, meanwhile, suggests that slavery did harm families. A "careful analysis of census data" by Steven Ruggles shows that as early as 1880, single parenthood was two to three times more common among blacks than whites. Earlier still, the slave trade had broken kinship groups, and slave codes had forbidden marriage.

We need to find—for exactly the reasons Wilson shows—a way back from the "illusory emancipation" that has damaged us so deeply.

Wilson quotes the work of Harvard scholar Orlando Patterson showing that slavery tended to deprive black men of the ability to perform as husbands and fathers: A slave "could offer to the mother and the child 'no security, no status, no name, no identity.'" Moreover, a male slave often had to live separately from the mother of his child. Brenda Stevenson has established, for example, that on George Washington's plantation, "only one-sixth of the slaves lived together as man and wife, and two-thirds of those who considered themselves married lived apart from their spouses." Recent scholars hardly seem bold when they argue that slavery's legacy is one reason for the greater vulnerability of African-American families to injurious modern trends.

Less distinctively American are other subjects Wilson covers: the speculations of evolutionary psychologists on the origins of marriage, the differences between marriage and cohabitation, the consequences of gender equality. To all he brings the rigor, dispassion, and balance that have marked his prolific writings and his long career as a teacher at Harvard, UCLA, and now Pepperdine University.

Indeed, this book has the strengths of its unruffled reasonableness—but also perhaps the limitations. Though Wilson begins by warning of "a profound corrosion of our cultural soul," he never sounds the alarm with the urgency of Charles Murray. Though he makes plain his personal allegiance to marriage (Wilson dedicates *The Marriage Problem* to his children and their spouses), he doesn't write with Maggie Gallagher's fervor of the need to restore the ideal of lasting love. Respectful as he is of the uses of religion, he is too restrained to cast in high relief the awkward implications of his argument: that every-man-for-himself morality untethered to religious truth is turning out to be corrosive of a free society; that if liberty is the unalienable gift of the Creator, then so may be the moral constraints by which free men are enjoined to live; and if that is the case, those constraints and their divine authority, no less than the civic duties of citizens, must be taught to all—an apparent impossibility in our present cultural climate.

But *The Marriage Problem* is a book about a problem, not about solutions. Wilson concludes with a brief call for private, "retail" efforts by families, churches, neighborhoods, and the media to persuade the young to marry before they have children. He is doubtless right to express skepticism about the government's ability to pull off so delicate an operation as the re-stigmatization of childbearing outside marriage. But can private initiatives succeed while government is neutral? One way or another, we need to find—for exactly the reasons James Q. Wilson so clearly shows—a way back from the "illusory emancipation" that has damaged us so deeply. ♦

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The Method of Truth

Hans-Georg Gadamer, 1900-2002.

BY WALLER R. NEWELL

Hans-Georg Gadamer, one of the most important and influential European philosophers of the twentieth century, died on March 13 at the age of 102. The author of dozens of books and articles, he was the principal founder of hermeneutics, an approach to textual interpretation now widely practiced at American universities. His magnum opus, *Truth and Method*, first published in Germany in 1960, propelled him to international fame with its translation into English in 1975.

Born in 1900, only a generation or two removed from figures as towering as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Dilthey, Gadamer was the last living link with the vanished world of high German civilization—the civilization of Kant, Goethe, and Beethoven, the civilization swept away by two world wars in a conflagration not unrelated to its own darker philosophical currents. Living through the disaster of the Third Reich, Gadamer sought consistently to rescue German philosophy from the apocalyptic and millenarian extremism that had led his mentor, Martin Heidegger, to place his prestige as Germany's leading philosopher at the service of a tyrant as he extolled "the inner truth and greatness of National Socialism."

As an undergraduate, I spent several evenings in Gadamer's company. At that time, in the mid-1970s, he had retired from his academic career in Germany and taken a position as an emeritus professor at McMaster University in Canada. That's when Allan Bloom was teaching at the University of Toronto, where I was one of his students. One evening Bloom summoned a few of us to his apartment and solemnly informed us that we were going to meet one of the most important scholars in the world. We were strictly admonished to show him the utmost respect.

Bloom always had a reverential attitude toward Gadamer, knowing how highly his own teacher Leo Strauss had regarded Gadamer. Indeed, Strauss had told Bloom not long before he died that his "last serious conversation" had been with Gadamer. At the meetings at Bloom's apartment, Gadamer would read one of his papers, to be followed by discussion. He seemed like the professor from a story book. Already an elderly man—although he would prove to have more than a quarter century remaining to him—he was benign and crinkly eyed, with a thatch of snowy hair and pink baby skin. He read his papers in a lilting German accent, and when a student questioned him, he would look back with his big, slightly sad eyes and respond without the slightest hint of condescension. It was as if we had been transported back to Weimar and Marburg, back to the days when philosophy was still beautiful, before the terrors of the century rolled in. Bloom, who was normally as voluble as Gadamer was restrained, on these occasions was almost entirely silent, watching the proceedings from a little outside the circle with a smile.

This was just before *Truth and Method* was translated into English. At that time, Gadamer was, for the most part, known only to devotees of Continental philosophy specializing in the thinkers he wrote about—chiefly the ancients, particularly Plato and Aristotle, and the modern German thought of Goethe, Hegel, and Nietzsche. All that changed when the translation came out in 1975. At Yale in the late 1970s, my wife and I saw a poster advertising a talk by Gadamer, so we decided to go and reintroduce ourselves and say hello. We didn't bother to come early, expecting to find ten or fifteen people in a seminar room. When we arrived, we found an audience of several hundred, pressing around Gadamer like a celebrity. We couldn't get near him. After a lifetime of scholarship, he became famous as an old man—and then had the good luck to enjoy that fame for another twenty-five years, through a continuous stream of books and a ceaseless round of classes. Recognized at last as he deserved to be, he enjoyed an array of endowed lectures and visiting professorships at America's leading universities.

According to Gadamer's theory of hermeneutics, the interpretation of texts never takes place in a vacuum. It always draws upon a shared communal understanding of cultural and linguistic traditions. In contrast to Kant's view of people as autonomous individuals able to strive against nature and history in the exercise of free will, Gadamer maintained that we are always already immersed in civic, historical, and aesthetic contexts. Kant severed moral autonomy from aesthetic and cultural fulfillment, but, for Gadamer, the communal context presupposes their intermingling.

Gadamer's supplementing of Kant with the communal contexts of tradition led to his long-standing debate with Jürgen Habermas, the chief heir of the social theorists known as the Frankfurt School. In Habermas's view, the Kantian ideal of free speech as a formal, universally valid, and logically necessary structure of communication is threatened by exactly the communal context Gadamer extolled—for that context is characterized by socioeconomic inequality and the monopolization of power.

But, for Gadamer, this was to miss the point. Since we are always already

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involved in a communal heritage, we can clarify our communication with one another only within that communal heritage's dense web of associations. In contrast to the Kantian formalism of Habermas, Gadamer invokes Aristotle's vision of a deliberative community guided by prudence, common sense, and precedent.

The massive shadow of Martin Heidegger looms over all twentieth-century philosophy, but Gadamer's approach to hermeneutics provided a way to argue against his teacher. Beginning in *Being and Time*, Heidegger had called for the "deconstruction" of the entire Western tradition of philosophy, which had culminated in "the forgetfulness of Being." In Heidegger's view, philosophical rationalism, beginning with Plato's Theory of Ideas, had imposed an iron cage of logical determinism and managerial expertise on the richness and mystery of life. The worst excesses of modern global technology—its advanced weaponry, its ravaging of the environment, its vulgar and philistine consumer culture spearheaded by the two modernist superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union—were not uniquely modern. They were the culmination of an attempt to subjugate Being and "the earth" to the arid determinism of "metaphysics" going all the way back to Plato. Indeed, the fate of the earth in the twentieth century could be summed up as "metaphysics working itself out as technology."

In order to shatter this iron cage of rationality, the entire Western canon had to be uprooted and the sovereignty of metaphysics dissolved. Only by returning to the mythopoeic and tragic reasoning of Heraclitus and the other pre-Socratics could we return to the crossroads at the origins of the West and this time take the right fork. That fork led away from the elevation of stability and permanence as the hallmark of truth—the metaphysical project begun by Plato and responsible for the woes of the modern world—and down the other path not taken, Heraclitus' identification of Being with flux and indeterminacy, a mysterious genesis out of which things emerge and into which they must pass away.

MIT Press

The young Hans-Georg Gadamer sawing wood with Martin Heidegger in 1923.

These teachings had a great impact on Gadamer. He did not dispute Heidegger's belief that modernity had reached a crisis point in the twentieth century, and that global technology summed up many of its most dangerous and culturally corrosive tendencies. Recalling his student days in Marburg and Freiburg, he identified the 1920s as "the end of the age of liberalism with its belief in progress based on science." But he firmly rejected Heidegger's contention that the crisis was set in motion by Plato and the ancients.

"Where I otherwise still appeal to Heidegger," he wrote to Strauss in 1961, "my point of departure is not the complete forgetfulness of Being, but rather . . . the unreality of such an assertion." Far from being the problem, the ancient thinkers, Gadamer believed, were our chief sources for counteracting the worst tendencies of modernity. The Western canon contained "restorative possibilities" for enriching the present.

When one interprets a text, Gadamer argued, there is a mutual encounter in which both reader and text are transformed: a "fusion of horizons" between past and present. The interpreter always brings certain interests to his reading—personal concerns as well as the broader cultural dilemmas of his age. Hence, it is not possible to achieve a strictly neutral or objective interpretation. When we read Plato on justice, for example, what we derive from Plato's reasoning will inevitably be shaped by our own quandaries about justice in the present. Reading the *Republic* in one country and era will be a different experience from reading it in another.

This does not mean, however, that we just "make up" the meaning of the text for ourselves. Gadamer was not a relativist. The meaning of the text is objectively real. But it is ambiguous and multi-layered, and we will light up different aspects of it depending on the path we take.

On this issue, Gadamer differed from Strauss, a friendly disagreement summarized in *Truth and Method* and continued in correspondence over the decades. Unlike Strauss, Gadamer did not believe it was possible to understand the author as he understood himself. If, for example, we were

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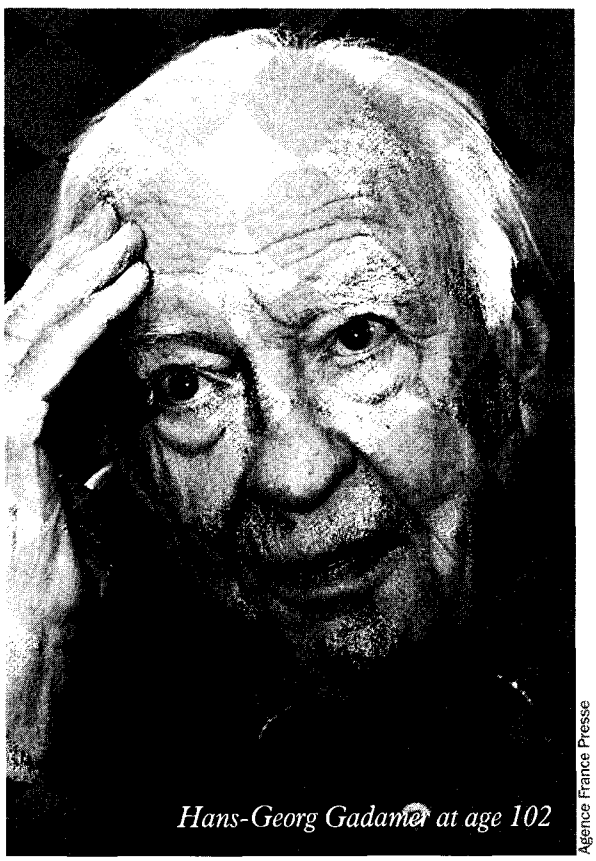
to find in reading Aristotle that he was "more correct" than "the corresponding modern theories," then wouldn't we have to conclude that "Aristotle could not understand himself in the way that we understand him," since he was not conscious of the modern theories? This is the "fusion of horizons": The very conclusion that ancient thought is superior to modern thought transforms the meaning of ancient thought.

The proponents of hermeneutics who came after Gadamer haven't always been as sensible—often regarding themselves as free to deconstruct texts in whatever showy and extravagant manner seized them. Sometimes this has taken the overtly politicized form of "action research," in which deconstruction is seen as an ally in dismantling oppressive power structures. Sometimes it has taken an apolitical bent, in which the critic fancies himself to be superior to the author he is interpreting. Because of his limitless freedom to reshape a text's meaning, it's the literature professor who turns out to be the creative genius, not Jane Austen, Rousseau, or the other authors being deconstructed.

Gadamer himself stands head and shoulders above these abuses of the hermeneutical movement to which he made such a huge contribution. Throughout his life, he was a tireless champion of liberal education. He believed that reading the Great Books was not only intellectually illuminating, but character-building. The patience, moderation, reverence, and perseverance needed to interpret a great work of philosophy or literature were the same virtues of character that every young person needs to acquire. In this respect, he belongs to a tradition that stretches from Plato to the Renaissance humanists: Philosophy is therapeutic, and it is also civic-spirited, because the virtues it fosters are the same ones we need in order to be good.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's reputation has suffered some attacks in recent years. In 2000, for example, Richard Wolin, the author of *Heidegger's Children*, published a curious magazine essay called "Untruth and Method" that read Gadamer's 1934 essay "Plato and the Poets" and 1941 lecture "*Volk* and History in Herder's Thought" as somehow fraught with the dark currents of Nazism. Remaining in Germany throughout the Nazis' reign, Gadamer was perhaps not among the most heroic. But he never remotely tainted himself with the kind of overt collaboration shown by Heidegger, whose public pronouncements in favor of the regime were organically intertwined with his philosophy and its call for "the people's return to Being."



Hans-Georg Gadamer at age 102

Agence France Presse

Moreover, Gadamer did not just lie low and teach his courses, as did many passive non-collaborators. One of his female students, who later became his assistant, was involved in the White Rose movement, that brief, doomed student protest against the Nazi regime which was the only act of open civil disobedience while Hitler was in power. Because of their friendship—she became his wife after the war—Gadamer fell under suspicion as the movement was crushed by the Gestapo. Especially after the von Stauffenberg plot to assassinate Hitler, when suspected White Rose sympathizers were rounded up, Gadamer and his assistant had to go into hiding. She was about to be arrested when the Soviet armies arrived.

In *Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue*, Gadamer recalls the era of Schiller, Goethe, and Hegel—the early period of German Idealism when its values were at their most liberal, in both the educational and the political senses of the word. These thinkers were not unabashed admirers of liberalism; they worried about its excesses of materialism and vulgarity. But, instead of turning their backs on liberalism, they wanted to help it. Schiller, in particular, firmly believed that "aesthetic education" could ennoble modern liberalism by giving it a high cultural mission and transmitting the riches of the Western tradition to the young. Education shows us how to arrive at freedom—the supreme value of the modern age—"through beauty."

That optimistic and benevolent spirit did not always win out in subsequent German culture. The twin dangers that Schiller and his contemporaries worried about—Jacobin fanaticism on the left and blood-and-soil tribalism on the right—gained adherents as the nineteenth century unfolded into the twentieth, culminating in Heidegger's identification of the Nazi "revolution" with the German people's return to its "destiny." But in Gadamer, that earlier hopeful strain in German philosophy lived on, never losing faith in the supreme value of learning and liberal studies. He embodied scholarship and higher education at their most inspiring. ♦

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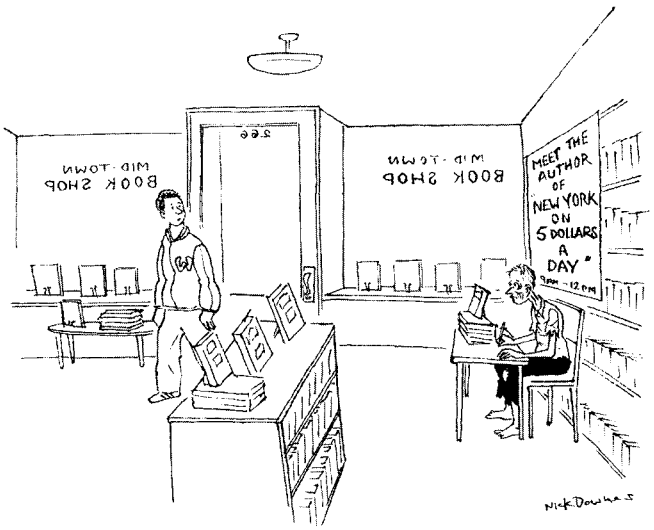

One Step from Death

THE WEEKLY STANDARD doesn't review much mass-market genre fiction, figuring such books manage to find readers all by themselves. But you may want to check out Dean R. Koontz's latest. Koontz is the best-selling author of such black thrillers and horror stories as *The Servants of Twilight*, *Darkfall*, and *Phantoms*—to say nothing of *Ticktock*, *Icebound*, *Dark Rivers of the Heart*, *Sole Survivor*, and nearly 80 other books.

His new thriller, *One Door Away from Heaven* (Bantam, 608 pp., $26.95), interweaves two plots: one in which a woman tries to save a crippled girl from being euthanized by her wicked stepfather, and another in which an odd boy is hunted across America by both the FBI and a gang of murderers. Along the way, Koontz denounces bad medicine, assisted suicide, and believers in extraterrestrials. But it was the author's note that caught our eye:

> Utilitarian bioethics as portrayed in *One Door Away from Heaven* is unfortunately not a figment of my imagination, but a real threat to you and to everyone you love. This philosophy embodies the antihuman essence of fascism, expresses the contempt for individuals' freedom and for the disabled and the frail that has in the past marked every form of totalitarianism. One day our great universities will be required to redeem themselves from the shame of having honored and promulgated ethicists who would excuse and facilitate the killing of the disabled, the weak, and the elderly.

We couldn't have said it better ourselves—and Koontz goes on to pay tribute to Wesley J. Smith, a frequent writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD:

> As I was finishing this novel, Encounter Books published a nonfiction work offering the best survey of utilitarian bioethics written for a general audience that I have yet seen. If, for your own protection and for the sake of those you love, you want to know more about the subject than I've covered herein, I highly recommend *Culture of Death: The Assault on Medical Ethics in America* by Wesley J. Smith. You will find it more hair-raising than any novel you've ever read.

We should mention that Wesley Smith is also the author of a new book, cowritten with Eric M. Chevlen, an Ohio physician specializing in pain relief who has written for our pages as well. Called *Power Over Pain: How to Get the Pain Control You Need* (ITFEAS, 235 pp., $12.95), it's mostly a consumer's guide for patients who are seeking effective pain medication from their doctors, with chapters on the origins of pain, the differences between acute and chronic pain, the effectiveness and side effects of morphine and other drugs, and the failure of physicians to treat pain correctly. But Chevlen and Smith also use the occasion to attack the current medical protocols that would rather control pain by helping patients die than by prescribing pain-relief medicine. We don't expect the book to sell quite as well as Koontz's *One Door Away from Heaven*, which reached number three on the *New York Times* bestseller list. But for patients threatened by the latest trends in bioethics, *Power Over Pain* fills an important gap.

—*J. Bottum*

Books in Brief

***Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism* by William J. Bennett (Doubleday, 170 pp., $19.95)** For William J. Bennett, September 11 constitutes one of those rare "teachable moments" when students are particularly open to instruction. Americans' knowledge of their own history is so deficient, Bennett suggests, that the nation's strong response to terrorism was almost in spite of our educational establishment. "Those who are *un*patriotic are, culturally, the most influential," Bennett explains, as he runs through the now familiar attempts by public intellectuals and academics to blame America first.

Arguing that the steady drip of anti-American hostility—trickling from the intellectual elite all the way down to grade schools—must be turned off, Bennett insists that public officials and parents have a renewed obligation to assist educators in the "reinstatement of a thorough and honest study of our history, undistorted by the lens of political correctness and pseudo-sophisticated relativism."

—*Beth Henary*

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Troops Called to Control Rukeyser Riot

By KESHAWAN JONES

HARTFORD, April 1 — President George W. Bush has called on the National Guard to quell riots that began in Rohaton, Connecticut, following PBS's decision last week to fire Louis Rukeyser from "Wall Street Week." What has become known as the WASP Intifada is now entering its fifth day and shows no sign of abating.

Crowds of deeply annoyed white men have been rampaging through the commuter towns of southern Connecticut and New York's Westchester County, looting Bonwit Tellers, turning over Range Rovers, and menacing local shopkeepers with putters and sand wedges.

What has become known as the WASP Intifada is now entering its fifth day.

The disturbances began last Friday night, when the region's CEOs, CFOs, and muni bond fund managers settled down in their dens for their weekly dose of Mr. Rukeyser's sardonic commentary and market analysis. When they learned that Rukeyser had been replaced after 437 years of doing the show, thousands spontaneously took to the streets, many still holding their highballs and battery-powered swizzle sticks. A procession of paunchy men in green pants and loafers soon formed and someone began the chant which has since become the movement's motto: "We're Perturbed! We Know It! But It Wouldn't Be Polite to Show It!"

The riots began modestly. On the first night, three men were issued summonses after trying to razor a Groton window sticker off a neighbor's Lexus, and Percy Biddle-Throckhopper was arrested after hurling a glass jar of gimlet onions into a "Plastics Only" recycling bin.

The following night, though, the situation began to spiral out of control. Posses of Presbyterians piled out of their Chevy Suburbans at the local police headquarters chanting "Free Biddle-Throckhopper!" and issuing threats such as: "No Justice, No Donations!" and "2-4-6-8, We Know How to Litigate!" The rioters were apparently unaware of the fact that Mr. Biddle-Throckhopper had called his counselors, Alan Dershowitz, David Boies, and Robert Bennett, shortly after his arrest, had been immediately released with an apology from the police, and was at that moment relaxing on his jet on his way to a spa in St. Bart's.

Still the violence did not end. Driven by hopelessness and despair, the extremely affluent men soon began tossing floral centerpieces at police. Some suburban wives sent their nannies to protest for them since they were too busy. And when one heart surgeon hurled a PBS tote bag filled with unread issues of Town & Country magazine at a local realtor, Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland

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Campaign Finance Obfuscations

Tibor R. Machan is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Campaign finance reform is back again, since it's got some powerful Republicans pushing for it! It should never have come to any kind of government action so why have the House and Senate approved a bill that could overhaul the nation's campaign finance laws to a degree not seen since the Watergate scandal nearly three decades ago?

Those who oppose campaign finance reform blew it when they tried to make it a freedom of speech issue. What those who find it disgusting to order people not to send money to whatever group or person they want to support should have done is to make the case on the basis of one's right to liberty of action and right to private property. If I earn money fair and square, it is I, not Congress or the United States president or anyone else, who should get to decide where it will be spent. Unless I am aiding and abetting some kind of violent crime with a victim, I am doing nothing that may be banned by anyone else. As a free citizen, in what purports to be a free society, I get to send money to anyone—and if I join a group for this purpose there should be no questions asked.

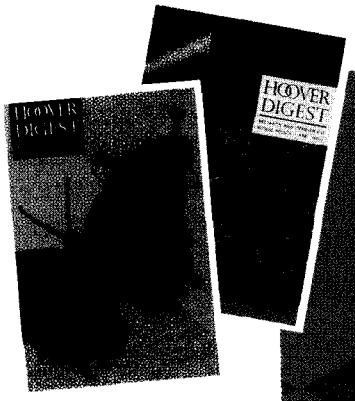
So instead of this straightforward defense of campaign contributions—be it soft or hard money—we now have spurious arguments about how regulating or banning such practices amounts to shutting people up. **The excuse for this is that the right to private property has become so ill-protected in our legal system that invoking it as a legally powerful reason for keeping and using one's own wealth as one sees fits is nearly impossible.** Courts do not pay attention to the fact that one is spending one's own money to advance a cause or a candidate.

But the First Amendment still has some clout. Freedom of the press is championed by at least the press, as well as those in the academic world. So if one wants the freedom to gain legal protection, one must relate it to freedom of speech or expression.

Although it may be a clever legal ploy to argue for freedom of speech, it is not convincing. To gain popular support, something must square with common sense. The defense of spending one's own wealth on some political cause or candidate by linking the spending to free speech just hasn't been persuasive. It's better to be honest and insist on the right to the free use of one's own property.

— Tibor R. Machan

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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Premieres Wednesday, April 3, 10, 17 at 9pm on PBS (check local listings)

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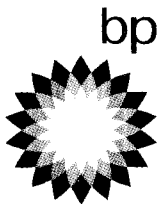

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